Cover Image by Kekai Kotaki | Jora © ArenaNet, Guild Wars

THE BEAUTIES AND THE BEASTS

from beautiful girls & shiny cars, to gothic towns
& the depths of space...

Hot Rod!
The penultimate part of our Vehicle Painting tutorial series sees **Dwayne Vance**
finalise his beast of a hot rod design

'The sleepy village never saw the horror approaching'
Nick Oroc and **Nathaniel West** are this month's Speed Painters, each with their
own unique interpretations of another weird but wonderful theme

Mining the Asteroid Fields
As **Chee Ming Wong** brings this epic tutorial series to a near close, he takes a
look at our future and imagines what everyday life could be like...

Editorial

Welcome to our issue of beauties and beasts. Within the pages of this month's magazine, you're going to stumble across the devilishly handsome and the beastliest beauties, as we have packed 2DArtist with stunning content across the board, with contributions from **Don Seegmiller**, **Kekai Kotaki**, **Nykolai Aleksander** and many, many more. And to illustrate the theme of "beauties and beasts" for us quite perfectly this month, we have our first artist interview with 2D artist veteran, **Don Seegmiller (p.7),** whose portfolio demonstrates a range of stunning realistic character portraits, to weird and wonderful cartoon illustrations. We've also interviewed cover artist, ArenaNet concept art lead **Kekai Kotaki (p.23),** who continues the theme exceptionally with his inspiring character concepts that will, quite simply, blow your mind. So there you go: 28 pages of stunning art by two of the industry's greats – enjoy!

This May issue also presents the penultimate parts of not one, but two of our fantastic tutorial series: Vehicle Painting by **Dwayne Vance** and **Hoi Mun Tham**, and Space Painting by **Chee Ming Wong**. But do not fret, for we're on the case and we have lined up for you some real treats for July. And because I'm not really one to keep a secrets (oops), I'll let you in on what's to come … First up, we have a series that we're all really excited about here at 2DArtist: Dynamic Characters – Enhancing your Character Concepts. We have some great names working on this series already, with more to come! And for all those budding artists out there who follow 2DArtist but have not quite got the hang of painting in Photoshop just yet, we'll be bringing you a Beginners Guide to Digital Painting in Photoshop in July, with another top artist signed up to teach you all they know and how to get started. So no excuses! I think we'll even find some twitching Wacom tablets in the office here once the series kicks off, as we can't wait to learn some tips from this pro. But back to this issue, we are of course sad to see the last but one of two of our series, but what great chapters they are! **Chee Ming Wong** is mining the asteroid fields **(p.95),** whilst **Dwayne Vance** is driving his sleek, futuristic vehicle into the desert sands in the final rendering of his awesome car concept **(p.75).** Not only this, but we have the talents of **Nick Oroc** and **Nathaniel West** in the Speed Painting tutorial section this month, where they both fight out the theme, "The sleepy village never saw the horror approaching" **(p.85).** And, as an extra special treat for you all, we have a bonus article from **Nykolai Aleksander** where she discusses the anatomy of a painting, using a new painting created especially for this article to demonstrate, so do check that out and get yourself inspired **(p.109)!**

What else? Well, we're talking centaurs and cyclopses in the Stylised Challenge section; our centaur entries blew us away – one of the best challenges yet **(p.61)!** Follow those beasts with another two stunning beauties in our Making Of section, by **Sara Biddle (p.119)** and **Dmitry Grebenkov (p.125)** – one a realistic character portrait, the other a stylised beauty. And wrap up this month's ever-so-chocker issue by checking out **Ivan Kash**'s sketchbook on **p.39,** and discovering some real treats from **Loic Zimmermann** and **Cynthia Sheppard** (plus more) in the Gallery.

Enjoy! Ed.

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Setting up your PDF reader

For optimum viewing of the magazine, it is recommended that you have the latest Acrobat Reader installed.
You can download it for free, here: DOWNLOAD!

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2DArtist magazine, you can set the reader to display 'two-up', which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the View menu, then Page display;
3. Select Two-up Continuous, making sure that Show Cover Page is also selected.

Contributing Artists

Every month, many artists around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist magazines. Here you can find out all about them. If you would like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist Magazines, please contact:

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Kekai
Kotaki

Born and raised on the big island of Hawaii, Kekai moved to Seattle Washington in 2000 to go to school and pursue a career in art. He's currently concept art lead at ArenaNet, working on *Guild Wars 2*.

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Chee
Ming Wong

Has over 8 years of creative visualisation and pre-production experience, having worked on various independent game projects, publications and CGI pre-production artwork. He is currently the CEO of his own digital art studio, Opus Artz, based in London. Previous work includes his role as senior concept artist and visual lead for *Infinity: The Quest for Earth MMO 2009*, plus numerous commercial publications.

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Dwayne
Vance

Has worked professionally as a designer for companies such as Mattel on *Hot Wheels* and has also designed protective gear for Troy Lee Designs. Now he has his own company called FutureElements and creates work for the motorsports, entertainment and auto industries. He also has his own line of hot rod art which is influenced by his concept design background.

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Nicolas
Oroc

Resides in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He currently works at A2M as a senior concept artist/illustrator. With 11 years' experience as an artist, he's worked in publishing, advertising, and for the last 6 years in gaming. Within 4 years of experience at Ubisoft Montreal, he's worked on titles such *Prince of Persia "Warrior Within"*, *Rainbow Six "Lock Down"* & *"Vegas"*, and preproduction on *Splinter Cell* next gen.

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Nathaniel
West

Freelance illustrator and designer residing in Los Angeles. He acts as an integral part of many exciting projects all around the world, which include themed entertainment, films and video games. He is currently focusing on production design for feature films, as well as continuing to work with clients to design meaningful spaces on various freelance projects.

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Nykolai Aleksander

Born in Germany in 1978, she moved to England in 1999, and currently lives in South Africa with her husband. She's been painting digitally since 2002, and works as a freelance illustrator for both private clients and companies.

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Sara Biddle

23-years old, Sara is a self-taught artist who was born and is currently residing in the United States. She has been painting in the digital medium for three years now. For a while, she only worked on personal paintings, but she has recently started working as a freelance illustrator.

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Oriol Muñoz Anguera

A graffiti artist of The Petados Crew from Barcelona and surrounding areas. He's currently working as a production/concept artist for 2D and 3D games, and manages to make time for his own personal projects in his free time. His motto is: "Love Walls!"

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Adrian Zhang

Loves to doodle, draw, eat and sleep. He started drawing about two years and believes in sharing it with the world. The tools of his trade are openCanvas, Photoshop, Flash, and occasionally 3ds Max. He wants to be a distinctive illustrator in the near future, and he hopes to draw for Flash games and video games, if the opportunities arise.

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Oleg Yurkov

An artist from Omsk, Russia who has been designing cartoon characters for games, websites and cartoons since '06 for clients worldwide.

http://oritey.ru/ | oritey@gmail.com
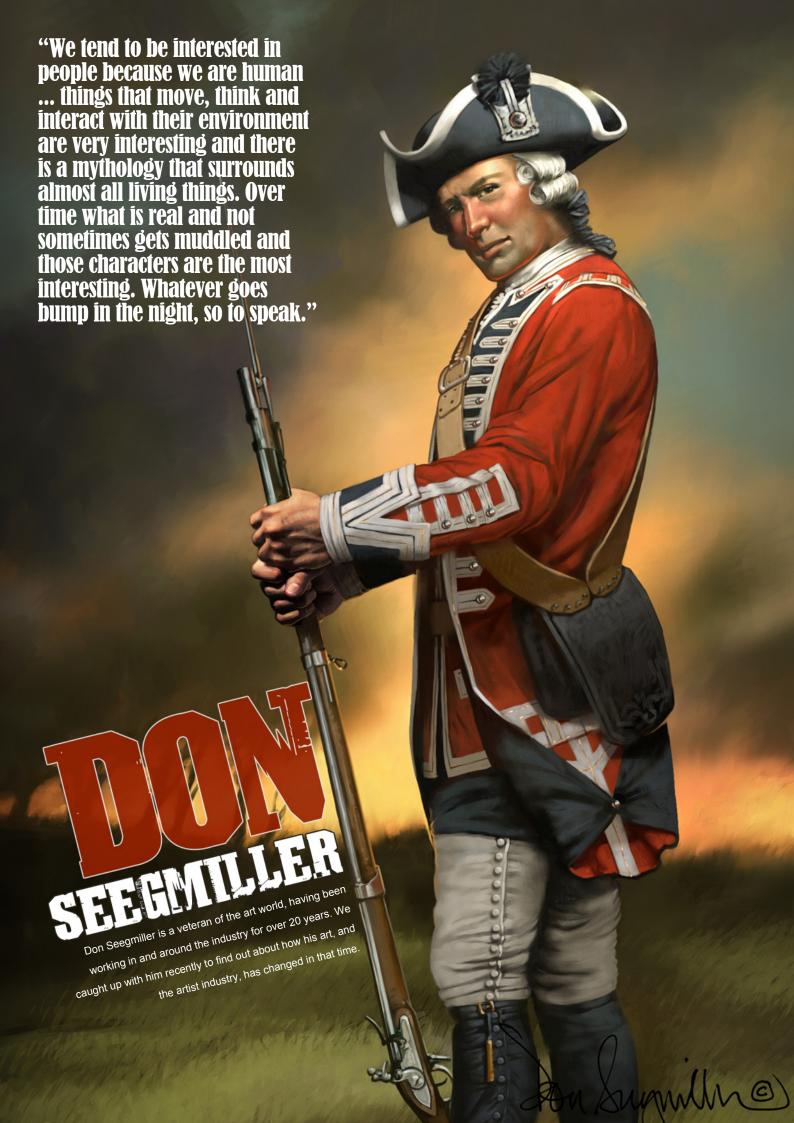
Inessa Kirianova

An illustrator, designer and photographer who has been working in the book publishing, advertising and game industries since 2004.

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Dmitry Grebenkov

After graduating Stavropol Artist College he bought a Wacom tablet and began to study digital painting. After several years of further self education he was invited to work on an MMORPG project as a 2D artist, and then moved to St. Petersburg where he lives and works at the moment. Inspiration for his work comes from music, interesting life experiences, and books. He doesn't like TV or LCD monitors, but does love cats.

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"We tend to be interested in people because we are human ... things that move, think and interact with their environment are very interesting and there is a mythology that surrounds almost all living things. Over time what is real and not sometimes gets muddled and those characters are the most interesting. Whatever goes bump in the night, so to speak."

DON
SEEGMILLER

Don Seegmiller is a veteran of the art world, having been working in and around the industry for over 20 years. We caught up with him recently to find out about how his art, and the artist industry, has changed in that time.

DON SEEGMILLER

Hi Don, welcome to the pages of 2DArtist and thanks for taking the time to chat to me today. I have to admit that although I've done my research for this interview, there's no handy "About" section on your websites and so you're still something of a mystery to me! So first things first: who are you, what do you do and how did you end up working in the 2D art industry?

Hi Jo, thanks for the opportunity to do an interview for 2DArtist. It's an honour and a pleasure. No, there is not an "about" section on my website. Part of that is intentional and part of it is just sheer laziness on my part. I guess though that an air of mystery can be a good thing. So who am I; that really isn't too hard a question to answer. I am a father, husband, and a grandfather. Maybe that's why I don't have an

"about" section, because I'm so much older than everyone else doing 2D work.

I graduated from school with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Illustration. That was back when the last of the dinosaurs were roaming the foothills and there was no such thing as computer art. Well, that's not actually 100% true; there were computers over in some of the science buildings that were being programmed to make images, but I'm not really sure that you could have called it art. I do remember that about the year after I graduated I saw the first commercially available computer on which you could generate simple art. It was about as big as a Volkswagen Beetle and cost around $250,000. You could draw lines, simple shapes, fill the shapes with simple gradients etc, and then output your masterpieces on colour Polaroid film. It never occurred to me at that point that I would ever be making art on a computer.

Fast forward about 10 years and I got a hand-me-down computer from my father. At the time I was thrilled. I could play games on the machine, like the original *Zork* and some of the Wizardry games, and it had a 14 inch CGA monitor. Man I was set! The first ever art program I bought was Electronic Arts' Deluxe Paint. It's funny, because it has been over 20 years since then and yet you still find people using Deluxe Paint today, or programs based on the Deluxe Paint model. The only problem with Deluxe Paint was that you had to build images pixel by pixel. I didn't really have the patience for that; doing a 640 x 480 pixel image took forever.

My first real breakthrough was the release of Fractal Design's Painter, an old CalComp stylus and tablet (the pen needed four hearing aid batteries to operate, which made the whole thing extremely heavy to draw with), a VGA video card and a monitor that could display 16 bit colour. I was hooked!

I actually ended up working in the digital industry when a company called Cygnus Multimedia hired me as a part-time artist. I would do my gallery paintings during the day and then work a few hours at Cygnus. They were developing early video games and I remember the first thing I worked on was an early Game Boy title.

Well, that's pretty much the short version. After a lot of twisting and turning, and travelling down unexpected paths, I've ended up at the point I am today - which is that I still don't really know what I want to be when I grow up.

Can you tell me a bit about the projects that you're working on at the moment? What do you get up to an a day to day basis?
Well right now it is not very exciting. I am doing a lot more writing than painting. I am currently developing two online classes for the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, both on digital painting.

I am also in the second week of an online workshop at CG Society. I do a number of workshops for them each year and the current one is on Fundamental Digital Painting. There seems to be lots of intermediate to advanced tutorial materials out there on the web, but very few fundamental tutorials. It is fun to start at the

beginning. After that one I will be doing either Monster Painting 2 or a Character Painting workshop, which is a mixture of figure and monster painting.

I am also doing some training materials for Autodesk. Once in a while I actually get to paint something... There is a story book on the horizon as well as several smaller projects. I tend to work long hours!

Now as I'm sure anyone can see from taking a quick glance at your digital work, you have a very distinctive artistic style. You seem to favour big, bold, character-driven pieces, with that wonderful stylised cartoony style and vibrant palate. So I guess what I'd like to know is, why this style? With all the different artistic directions you could have taken, why did you decide to go down this particular route?

Your question about why I have gone down the artistic path that I have is a good one, but I may not have a good answer. My traditional artwork is extremely classical and realistic in nature. My digital art started out as sketches scanned from my sketchbook and then painted. In a lot of cases there is really no rhyme or reason for what I do. I do draw constantly, so I have a lot of material to fall back on. In fact, I have a whole bookshelf full of sketchbooks and drawings. My kids are already arguing over who gets what when I die; I tell them that I hope it is still quite a ways away!

I think the only real trend in my work is the character driven aspect. I find people, animals, creatures, whatevers - both living and organic - much more interesting than either landscape or hardware. It really is the only thread that I'm aware of in the work.

What is about characters that you find so intriguing?

Actually, I think it is a very natural thing. We tend to be interested in people because we are human. I think that women are particularly interesting since I don't have a clue how they think. I have been married for 30 years and I still don't understand the true meaning of some things my wife says to me. There is a very female code speak that I am not sure men ever understand! Seriously though, things that move, think and interact with their environment are
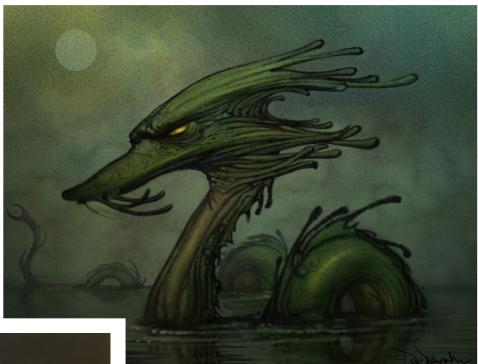
very interesting and there is a mythology that surrounds almost all living things. Over time, what is real and not sometimes gets muddled and those characters are the most interesting. Whatever goes bump in the night, so to speak.

I also noticed a couple of beautiful, naturalistic human character studies sneaking in among all the stylized images in your gallery. Is there a story behind these? They seem a departure from what I would call your normal digital style.
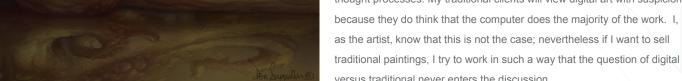
The naturalistic and realistic human studies look more like my traditional gallery work than the rest of the pieces you see. I tend to keep my gallery work and my digital work very separate. There is still somewhat of the myth floating around that the computer does all the work when creating art. I can't afford and don't want my traditional clients to feel that what they are paying for has been created on the computer. Of course it is still pretty much impossible to create an oil painting on a computer. Before becoming a digital artist I did make my living as a gallery painter and I have painted close to 1000 of these figurative paintings. Every so often it is fun to try and emulate what I do in the traditional world on the computer and that is where the images you speak of come from. So actually, my digital work is the real departure from my real style, which is very classical and traditional looking figure paintings.

There appears to be quite a clear distinction in your own mind between digital and traditional art. Do you think it's important for an artist to embrace both, or do you feel that one has more merit than the other? And what's your opinion on the myth that digital painting lets the computer do all of the work?

Actually, I think the distinction between digital and traditional art is more in the viewer's mind than in mine. To me, creating an image - whether it is digital or traditional - requires the same amount of effort and the same thought processes. My traditional clients will view digital art with suspicion because they do think that the computer does the majority of the work. I, as the artist, know that this is not the case; nevertheless if I want to sell traditional paintings, I try to work in such a way that the question of digital versus traditional never enters the discussion.
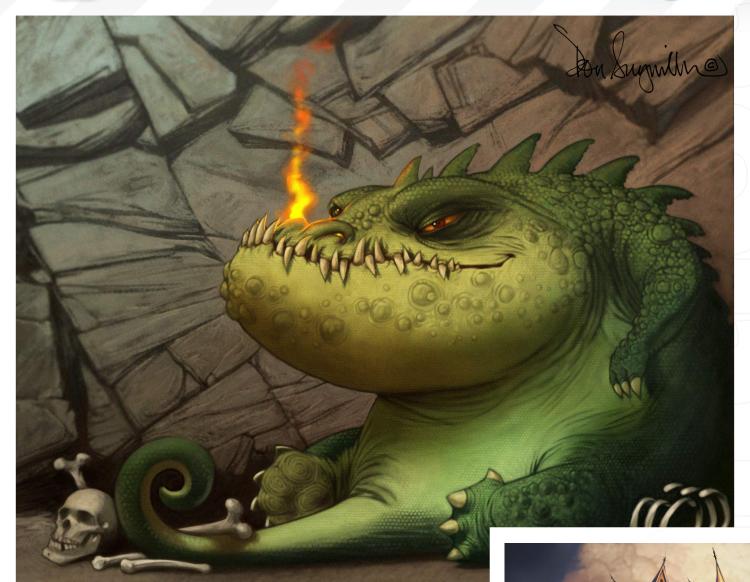
I don't think that your question about embracing both digital and traditional is really valid. Please, don't take that to mean that I'm looking down on the question; it's just that, in my opinion, creating art is about creating art, regardless of the medium. We just happened to be in an era when there is a new medium arising. I'm quite sure the same question could have been raised back when oil painting started to replace the tempera as a medium.

I have no doubt that the amount of digital art created is going to continue to increase. I also have no doubt that good art will always be good art and the opposite will also be true. We have reached the point where there is the digital equivalent of the Sunday painter – thank goodness! If it weren't for the Sunday painter, Bob Ross, Gary Jenkins, and all the other PBS Saturday morning hour programming, artists would not be able to afford oil paint because the market would be so small. It simply wouldn't be profitable for companies to produce the basic materials. The same is now happening with digital art; in particular I think of Poser and Daz Studio. Here are two applications that let the Sunday digital artist create their own worlds using existing models or by creating their own. There is so much 3D content available that you would never have to learn how to model or texture and yet you would still be able to create images. It is the same as being able to paint without knowing how the paint is made. Because of this huge market, content and 3D models have dropped to a ridiculously low price. You can find and buy a model for almost anything. In many cases you can find it for free, whereas not too long ago you would have had to pay a premium price for a 3D model. So really, the same thing is happening with this new medium. It is becoming more affordable for anyone to dabble in.

So I'm not sure if that answers your question precisely or not. I don't think it is important to embrace either if you're only interested in one or the other. The most important thing is to learn how to be a good artist. Generally, that is done more easily through traditional means, because most of the really good artists that are teaching are also traditional artists. But that is
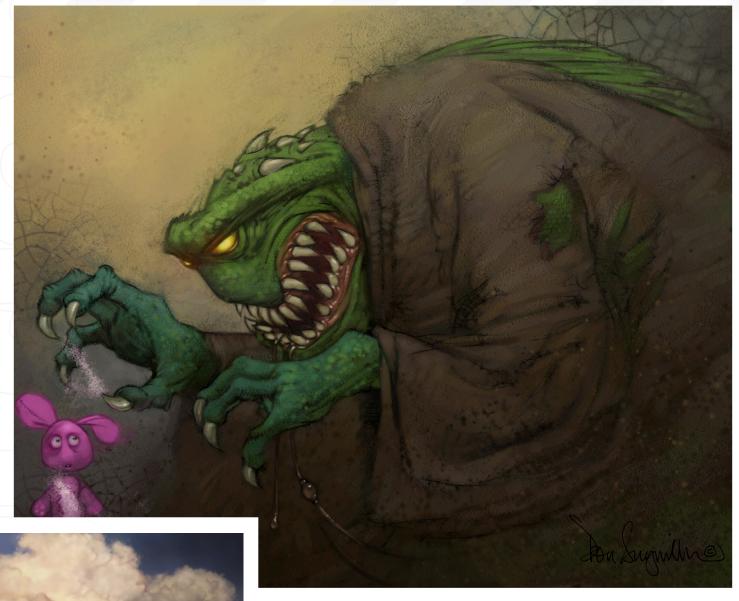
also changing because now there are extremely talented digital artist teaching, whereas 10 years ago this was not the case. At some point I'm quite sure that digital art will be viewed as just another medium. We are not quite there yet, but it is getting close.

The myth that the computer does all the work is also changing as the generations change. Younger people are more likely to accept computer art than older people are. Most of this comes from a better understanding of computers and how they work. It was probably much the same when society moved from horses to cars. It is funny though when you think about it; the computer is a very powerful tool, but for the most part they don't think for

themselves. Or at least ones available to the everyday person don't think for themselves... yet.

Once, I was letting a script play and Painter to create an image I had recorded earlier at a different size and resolution. It was chugging right along doing its thing and I wasn't paying much attention. Without knowing it, someone had walked up behind me and was watching the computer paint an image without any input from me. After a few moments they asked me how this was being done. I simply replied that I hit the "Paint Like Don" button and that was all I had to do, the image then painted itself. They nodded their head and talked to me for a few moments more, and then the light finally

came on and they realised that I had actually done something and the computer was simply following my directions. There was still that initial moment though where they believed the computer was doing the work - I still get a chuckle when I think about it.

You make some interesting comments about sketching in your blog and on your website, and it's clear from the five pages worth of gallery images that sketching is as natural to you as breathing! What is it about sketching that you like so much? And do you just start sketching and see where inspiration takes you, or do you already have ideas in mind when you put pen to paper?

Like I mentioned earlier, I carry a sketchbook everywhere. Sometimes I carry more than one. I keep several in my pickup and a couple in my wife's car. Given the chance I pull them out at every opportunity.

I don't know if this will make any sense, but this is kind of the reason I love my sketchbooks. When I was a child I had to draw. I would draw on everything, including the edges and gutters of my school textbooks. Often this was an activity that was not greeted with much enthusiasm by the adult world, though my parents didn't mind at all. Now that I'm an adult, I still have to draw, but believe me, they are very different reasons for it. My sketchbooks are really the art that I do for pleasure without the consideration of any commercial gain. Pretty

much everything else I do is geared toward making a living and supporting my family. Don't get me wrong; I would rather make a living by drawing and painting someone else's ideas than asking if they would like french fries with that order and only painting and drawing in the evenings!

I do admit that quite a bit of my digital painting which is based on my sketchbooks is also done for pleasure, although sometimes those pieces are also able to generate income. I have been asked frequently if I will ever do a book of my sketches. That project is in the works and hopefully this year there will be a small book of selected sketches available.

Which links neatly in with my next question: you've been featured in several books (such as *d'artiste*, from Ballistic Publishing) and you've also produced a number of your own, including *Digital Character Painting Using Photoshop CS3* and, most recently, *Advanced Painter Techniques*. How did you get into this line of work? And do you think it's important for an experienced artist like yourself to be willing to share their knowledge with others?

Okay, this is an interesting question. I do have a number of books under my belt and even more rattling around in my head, but I never sought out the opportunity to write books. The publishers would come to me and ask if I would be interested in doing this type of work. Initially, I wasn't. I had not written anything longer than a few random emails here and there and was not sure of my ability to actually write and illustrate a book. My last English composition class was in high school, which was a long time ago! Now that I've done a couple of books, I can honestly say that it no longer terrifies me, but I still don't enjoy the process much. I always feel rushed and never seem to be able to put the finishing touches on the paintings I use for the tutorials. However, I do feel it is important to continue to write books. There are a number of reasons really, but getting back to your question about sharing knowledge with others, yes I do think that's important.

I have a basic belief that if I can make the road easier for others by sharing what I know then it will pay back beyond ways I can imagine. I'm not necessarily talking about myself receiving payback; in fact, that really isn't in the equation. But if I can share something valuable with somebody else, then they might pass along it along too. I think if everybody tried to share the good aspects of their work and the knowledge that they have, then the world would be a much better place. Now that might sound pretty corny but it's the truth. Having run a number of workshops online, coupled with writing the books, I think it's fair to say that I have friends all over the world that I would never have had the opportunity to meet otherwise. I love it; they all seem to be great people and frankly it is hard to get mad

or want to go to war with people you know on a personal basis. If my small interaction with others spreads good in any way, then it's worth it.

On a less altruistic note, I have no problem showing other artists everything that I know and how I do things. I feel comfortable enough with my own art that I'm not afraid of someone taking what I share and competing in the same market. There are always going to be people with a lot more skill than I have, as well as people with less. We're all on the same artistic road; some are just a bit farther down the line. I do know artists that will not share techniques or methods and it seems a real shame to me.

Yeah I definitely agree with you on that point – I bet there's not one artist out there who can claim to have developed their own techniques without relying on the advice and knowledge of others. Okay, one last question just to tie things up: can you tell us a little bit about how art and the artist industry have changed for you over the years? And where do you see both the industry and your own work heading in the future? Is it all going to be about digital art?

How has the art industry changed for me?

That is an interesting question. Quite frankly, when I was younger I did more art. It took me longer because it was with traditional mediums. I still love to work with traditional mediums, but they are slow when compared to digital mediums. I also wasn't very good, although I thought I was God's gift to the art world!

Now that I am a bit older I realize just how very much I still don't know about creating art. I do hope I continue to learn and I believe I am slowly getting better. I find that the speed of digital art allows me to experiment and that the results of these experiments almost always find their way into my traditional work, although it never works the opposite way around. I no longer think I'm God's gift to the art world and realize that there will always be those that are much better than I could ever be and those that are not. I have become comfortable with what I do, as long as I feel I continue to push myself. I am quite sure this is related to approaching middle age; of course as the years pass middle age gets pushed further and further out - thank goodness!

I guess the other major change is that in the beginning I was relatively inexperienced. Now I am now quite a bit more experienced than I used to be. This only comes from creating a large body of work that shows consistency and quality, which is something every artist should strive for over the years. Don't worry about style; it will come on its own.

I think there will always be a place for the traditional mediums. Aside from some sculpture and printmaking techniques, traditional mediums produce one-of-a-kind works of art. There will always be a demand for the unique. The line is going to blur – and already is – as artists use the computer to create under paintings, print multiple copies, and then paint over these under paintings to create a "unique" work of art.

Pure digital will continue to grow. As computers increase in power, as software packages have more tools and as the world changes around us, artists will use these tools and create things that we can't imagine today.

One new thing I'm now seeing more of, which I rarely saw a few years ago, is the use of 3D printers to create sculptures. The most delicate and intricate fractals and other types of 3D data can now be made into a 3D model that you can hold in your hand. At this point it may be plastic or some sort of resin, but that can be easily converted into a metal piece of sculpture. I saw some incredibly beautiful examples of this at the last SIGGRAPH conference.

I hope to own a 3D printer at some point. The prices continue to drop and hopefully soon they will become as cheap, relatively speaking, as current 2D printers. I can't wait for the day when I can take some of my 2D work and make them into 3D "images" that you can hold in your hand. It's a brave new world and I'm really excited about!

Thanks for the opportunity to ramble. It has been great fun and an honour.

Don Seegmiller

For more work by this artist please visit:

http://www.seegmillerart.com/

http://www.seegmillerart.blogspot.com/

Or contact them at:

don@seegmillerart.com

Interviewed by: Jo Hargreaves

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KEKAI KOTAKI

Concept art lead for ArenaNet, Kekai Kotaki recently took time out from his daily schedule to talk to 2DArtist about everything from his background in art and what it's like to work alongside the talents of Daniel Dociu and Jaime Jones, to how he keeps himself and others inspired and how to best sample a buffet. Along with a stunning portfolio from another of ArenaNet's greats, this is an interview not to be missed!

KEKAI KOTAKI

Hi Kekai, thanks so much for taking this time out to speak to 2DArtist magazine. To kick things off, can you introduce yourself and tell us a bit about how things got started for you in terms of digital art? And what you're currently up to in your career as a concept artist?

Hello, I am happy to be able to do this interview. I was born and raised in Hawaii; I am of both Hawaiian and Japanese ancestry. I got my first taste of digital art back when I was a senior in high school; it must have been a copy of Photoshop 5, or something. And the Wacom tablet that they had was one of those huge clunky things the size of a desk with the pressure sensitivity of a brick! I was only able to use it for a short period of time and it wasn't until I got into art school almost a year afterwards that I was able to truly start to learn how to use it. That was almost 10 years ago now.

I am currently busy working at ArenaNet on *Guild Wars 2*. My position now is Concept Art Lead. I still work on concept art, but also I have the additional responsibilities of taking care of my team and making sure everything is on track to ensure that *Guild Wars* is still recognised as one of the most beautiful games on the market.

Ah-ha, yes, *Guild Wars*! Such a title must bring a high level of responsibility and keep not just you, but also the whole of your team, at the top of your game and producing the quality artwork that the *Guild Wars* name demands. But just how to you go about maintaining a team of happy scribblers? What is the studio environment like at ArenaNet – do you feel the space that you work in as an artist has an impact on productivity? Any tips?

It truly is a balancing act. On one hand you want your artists to be happy with what they are working on, but on the other hand it is a job and you do not want someone burning out on you. I

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try to locate where an artist's talent lies and then try to funnel that type of work to them. I also make sure that the work is varied enough so that nobody gets bored and uncreative. Keeping them on their artistic toes is how some would put it! There is no real time limit on most of the work that people do, except for those times when somebody really needs something right away or if there was a set deadline beforehand. Allowing an artist room to breathe and time to explore a concept is very important here at ArenaNet. However, at the end of the day, this is a job. I trust the artists to be responsible with their time. If someone is spinning wheels on a pretty painting that does little to push the concept that was assigned to them, it is partly my responsibility to get them back on track. There are many assignments that may not be the most glorious jobs to work on, but they must get done and done to a level that matches the high artistic standard that we have worked so hard to establish here at ArenaNet.

To this end, the environment here is both loose and studious. The environment you work in can play a huge roll in your productivity. Too many distractions can detract from your concentration, while eight hours a day, seven days a week

of no talking and just drawing can quickly kill creativity. One of the big strengths of working in a team is the interplay of thought and ideas. Sharing thoughts with one another creates a fertile ground for bigger and more unique ideas.

In this way it is not just one artist working on a concept; it becomes a team effort, with everyone contributing in their own way. If there is one particular tip I can give it's that information is key. Being an informed and knowledgeable person will help others because you can bring something new to the table to share.

> **"If there is one particular tip I can give it's that information is key. Being an informed and knowledgeable person will help others because you can bring something new to the table to share."**

Having studied a degree in animation, art and design before starting your career in the games industry, do you feel that your education greatly helped to get you to the level/position that we find you in today? It's an age-old question isn't it: To study at a university/institute/academy, or to self-teach? What are your thoughts?
[Laughs] It is a very tricky question. In hindsight, I learned more on my own than I ever did in school. Also, nothing compares to the things you learn once you get your first job in the industry. Having said that, I do think that going to art school was an important step. I came here to Seattle in 2000 after graduating from high school with no clue of what I really wanted to do. All I knew was that I loved to draw and that was it. In art school I was able to find out where the ground was so that I could put my feet on it. I also made friends, some whom are co-workers with me here at ArenaNet. So even though I could say that I learned nothing from art school and that it might not have been worth it, I can't knock the fact that it was a beginning for me. Maybe that's what the real question is: How do you want to begin your path as an artist?

Very well answered, Kekai! I'll keep that question in my ideas pot for a future interview – love it! Can you give any examples of experiences, whether at art school or in your job, that really defined what and who you wanted to be? For example, any particular conversations, lectures or meetings that gave you one of those "light bulb" moments?
There are too many to count! It all blurs together and the end result is the artist that I am today and striving to become tomorrow. Hearing one of my teachers talk about the differences between Boris Vallejo and Frank Frazetta; how composition and emotion create greater art than staid highly rendered images; the first time I stumbled upon Craig Mullins' website and saw what was possible with digital art; seeing Justin Sweet's art for the first time and being able to say, "I want to create art like that!"; to the many conversations with Daniel Dociu about art, careers and life; meeting people like Jaime Jones and seeing the dedication up front in person; opening up my first copy of Bridgeman and studying the human figure. There are too many to name. I just try to live out the results.

After working with you on the Digital Art Masters: Volume 4 book project (like the plug?), I know that you're greatly inspired by the books that you read. Also checking out your blog, http://kekai.blogspot.com/, your latest piece seems to have been inspired by a mythology book. But when books just aren't doing it for you, how do you get yourself inspired and painting again? Any tips?
I am greatly inspired by the books I read. But sometimes there are no really good books out there. But there is a wealth of inspiration out in the world and all you need to do is go out there and find something that clicks with you. Look at photographs of beautiful places in the world. See the latest in graphic design. Look at artists, both current and past. Go and see the latest summer blockbuster or rent the indie hit of last year. Buy that hot new game that just came out. There are many things out there, and I try to make sure that I taste them all. When you go to the buffet line you should try and get as much different food as possible. Only when you've worked out which ones you like do you go back and pile your plate with those select choices!

Loving the food analogy, Kekai (I feel hungry now – buffet, anyone?) – great answer! With so much inspiration and so many ways with which to feed your brain, how do you get everything down into material form? Do you carry a sketchbook, or perhaps an electronic one? … Make notes on the train? Could you also give us a pretty basic outline of how you go about your average concept painting, from initial concept through to the final painting?

I always seem to have a sketchbook handy. Or if not, then any sort of variation on a pencil and paper will do if I want to jot down a quick idea. But that is really just visual information. The stuff I am really interested in is the mood, feeling and emotion of a particular idea. And that is best kept with memory. Taking down a quick sketch helps jog the memory. When starting a concept it is a very similar process: I begin with some sort of prompt, whether it comes from design or me, and I try to have a finished "feeling" in

my head that I want to happen. Painting the concept is just me trying to remember that feeling and expressing that in the concept. All the compositions, figures studies and design rules are there for me to use in order to better

express myself. I start rough and simple; grey and white to begin with, moving later onto a monochromatic colour scheme that is usually warm browns and greys. When I am getting towards the end of a piece I try to pick a colour

to paint into the concept. Details in figures and environments are done in the same fashion – rough and loose with continued refinement. Since the concept is based on the feeling that I am trying to find, nothing is safe. Things change according to how I feel about the piece. I try not to get hung up on small details that may look cool by themselves, but overall aren't helping anything. This continues until the piece is done.

We're huge fans of the Guild Wars concept art here at 2DArtist. What is daily work life like exactly, working at ArenaNet as a concept artist alongside great artists such as Daniel Dociu, Jaime Jones and Jason Juan to name just a few?

Invaluable. Humbling. Fun. One of the great things about working in this sort of environment is that you are "there" when it happens. It's one thing to see the finished product, but to be there and actually see it happening before your eyes? Nothing really beats that, and the flow of ideas that happens naturally. I am always learning something on the job. There is always something more to push. It is a great place to be, and I hope I never leave.

Well, we hope you don't leave either! It's rare to find a place of work that makes you smile in the morning, so it's really wonderful that you've found your place in the world. Kudos! Now, I'm just being nosey here, but could you possibly give us a "day in the life of Kekai" and tell us a little about what happens on your average day as concept art lead?

My average day consists of me trying to keep ahead of everyone else, while still trying to create art on my own. The main goal is to try and stay aware of what is going on in the different departments that are connected to concept art. This happens by keeping in contact with the various art leads and producers of the company, finding out what is being worked on and what is coming up next in the pipeline. Since we outsource a fair amount of art, but not concepts, keeping track of the various drop off dates and making sure concepts are prepped properly has become a major part of my job description. Also making rounds through my own department to make sure everyone is on track and that everyone has the proper information plays a big part in my day too. There are also a fair amount of meetings that happen to deal with different issues that pop up. Actually formal meetings do not make up that much of my day; most problems are solved on a case by case basis as they come to my attention. In between all of this I try to sit at my desk and finish what work needs to be done. Somehow it all comes together, which I am not sure is part of my job description [Laughs]!

I'm often interested in the tools that artists use - hardware, software etc. - and also how they go about backing up their work to insure against HD crashes or other such problems. So what are your chosen tools to aid you in your fantastic creations? I know that having all the right tools doesn't make a great artist, but it's always interesting to learn what artists and using and why.

That is a very true statement. But at the same time it is nice having the best stuff. My setup when I am working is a very basic one: I use Photoshop CS2 – nothing really grabbed me about CS3 – and I am still waiting to get CS4. I tend not to change something just for the sake of changing it. I use an Intuos 3 tablet. And there's nothing much beyond that. I have a work laptop that I like to back stuff up on. I am a big believer in keeping things simple.

Sure, I agree with you there! Talking about keeping things simple: do you paint traditionally, at all?

I dabbled in traditional painting a few years ago, but I lacked the patience and motivation needed to learn something like that. I hope to pick it back up again someday in the future. Right now the only traditional art I do is the sketches in my sketchbook and charcoal life drawing studies.
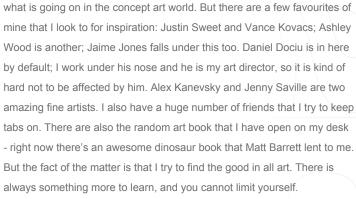
Okay, so we've discussed life as a concept artist, work at ArenaNet, tools of the trade … but what about the artist beyond the art – what do you get up to in your free time (if there is such a thing!) when you escape the world of pixels for the one made of all things bright and beautiful?

[Laughs] Free time…? What is that? I joke … kind of. There are very few things in my life that aren't connected in some way to art. I could say that I like to read books, go to movies, look at comics … but then I am using that as a way to help me better my art. I like to hang out with friends, but of course many of those are great artist themselves. I guess the best way I get a break from art is by kicking back with a beer and watching the latest TV drama with no redeeming value ... then again, that only makes me want to get back to doing art!

Well, you're a true artist, Kekai – you live and breathe the stuff! Finally, I've just realised I haven't asked you about your artist favourites: whose artwork do you regularly follow and turn to time and time again?

I try to keep up with any number of artists on the different art forums. I try to stay aware of

what is going on in the concept art world. But there are a few favourites of mine that I look to for inspiration: Justin Sweet and Vance Kovacs; Ashley Wood is another; Jaime Jones falls under this too. Daniel Dociu is in here by default; I work under his nose and he is my art director, so it is kind of hard not to be affected by him. Alex Kanevsky and Jenny Saville are two amazing fine artists. I also have a huge number of friends that I try to keep tabs on. There are also the random art book that I have open on my desk - right now there's an awesome dinosaur book that Matt Barrett lent to me. But the fact of the matter is that I try to find the good in all art. There is always something more to learn, and you cannot limit yourself.

Thank you for giving me the chance to do this interview. I had a fun time.

The pleasure is all ours Kekai, talk to you soon!

Kekai Kotaki

For more work by this artist please visit: http://www.kekaiart.com/

Or contact them at: kekai.k@gmail.com

Interviewed by: Lynette Clee

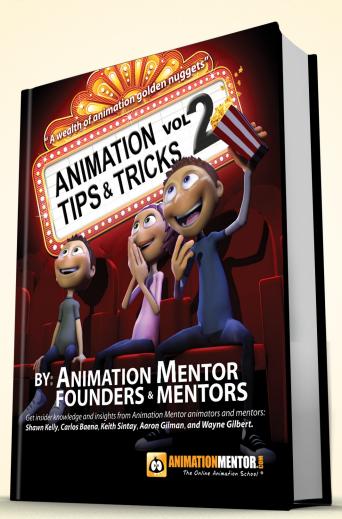Vancouver Film School alumni credits include **Across the Universe** Geeta Basantani, Digital Compositor **Alias** Scott Dewis, Visual Effects Artist **Ant Bully** Ben Sanders, Character Animator | Rani Naamani, Animator | Ernesto Bottger, Character Animator **AVP: Alien Vs. Predator** Shawn Walsh, Color & Lighting Technical Director **Babel** Luis Blackaller, Storyboard Artist | Lon Molnar, Visual Effects Supervisor **Battlestar Galactica** Daniel Osaki, Lead Modeler | Megan Majewski, 3D Animator | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Blizzard Entertainment** Alvaro Buendia, Cinematic Artist **Bolt** Lino Di Salvo, Supervising Animator/Voice of Vinnie **Charlotte's Web** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor | Adam Yaniv, Character Animator | Tony Etienne, Lead Lighter Kristin Sedore, Lighter **Chicago** Lon Molnar, Animation Supervisor **The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** Kristin Sedore, Lighter | Shawn Walsh, Lighter | Adam Yaniv, Character Animator **The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian** Andreas Hikel, Pre-Visualization Artist | Christoph Schinko, Character Animator | Jami Gigot, Senior Layout Artist **Cloverfield** Nicholas Markel, Pre-Visualization Supervisor **Constantine** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **The Dark Knight** Pietro Ponti, Lead CG Lighting Artist **Dead Like Me** Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Diablo III** Alvaro Buendia, Cinematic Artist | Steven Chen, Cinematic Artist **Family Guy** Michael Loya, Storyboard Artist **Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer** Arun Ram-Mohan, Lighting Technical Director | Shawn Walsh, Visual Effects Executive Producer | Jessica Alcorn, Compositor **Flags of our Fathers** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Gears of War (VG)** Scott Dossett, Animator **The Godfather (VG)** Kirk Chantraine, Motion Capture Specialist **The Golden Compass** Adam Yaniv, Animator | Chad Moffitt, Animator | Thom Roberts, Animator | Ben Sanders, Animator Andrew Lawson, Animator | Matthias Lowry, Visual Effects | Tony Etienne, Look Development Justin Hammond, Lighter Technical Director | Aruna Compositor | Fion Mok,

Pearl Hsu, Effects Inversin, Digital Matchmove Artist

Your name here.

Hairspray Lon Molnar, Visual Effects Production Executive **Halo 3** Bartek Kujbida, Character Animator **Happy Feet** Ben Sanders, Character Animator | Thom Roberts, Character Animator **Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban** Shawn Walsh, Color & Lighting Technical Director **Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix** Pietro Ponti, Technical Director **Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince** Harry Mukhopadhyay, Lead Effects Technical Director **Hellboy** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Hellboy II: The Golden Army** Christoph Ammann, 3D Sequence Supervisor **Horton Hears a Who** Arun Ram-Mohan, Lighting Technical Director | Brent Wong, Modeler **Hulk** Geoff Richardson, Visual Effects Editor **I, Robot** Daniel Osaki, CGI Modeler | Megan Majewski, Pre-Visualization **Ice Age: The Meltdown** Ben Sanders, Character Animator | Arun Ram-Mohan, Lighting Technical Director **The Incredible Hulk** Shawn Walsh, Visual Effects Executive Producer Tony Etienne, Look Development Lead **Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull** Henri Tan, Creature Technical Director **Iron Man** Adam Marisett, Visual Effects Artist **King Kong** Chad Moffitt, Senior Animator **King of the Hill** Michael Loya, Director **Kingdom Hospital** Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist | Megan Majewski, 3D Animator | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Kingdom of Heaven** Shawn Walsh, Digital Compositor **Letters from Iwo Jima** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Live Free or Die Hard** Jessica Alcorn, Compositor **Lord of the Rings Trilogy** Chad Moffitt, Senior Animator **Lost** Scott Dewis, Visual Effects Artist **Lucasfilm Animation Singapore** Sandro Di Segni, Senior Effects Technical Director/Lead Digital Artist | Ming Chang, Lighting Technical Director | Adrian Ng Chee Wei, Character AnimatorSeema Gopalakrishnan, CG Software Developer **Mass Effect (VG)** Sung-Hun (Ryan) Lim, 3D Modeler **Matrix: Revolutions** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor | Shawn Walsh, Color & Lighting Technical Director **Master & Commander: The Far Side of the World** Robert Bourgeault, CG Artist **Metal Gear Solid 4 (VG)** Josh Herrig, Artist | Yuta Shimizu, Artist **The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Night at the Museum** Allen Holbrook, Animator | Adam Yaniv, Character Animator | Chad Moffitt, Animator | Kristin Sedore, Lighter **Persepolis** Marianne Lebel, Animator **Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End** Ben Sanders, Character Animator Allen Holbrook, Animator | Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything: A VeggieTales Movie** Mike Dharney, Animation Supervisor **Reign of Fire** Lino DiSalvo, Animator **Resident Evil: Extinction** Joshua Herrig, Visual Effects Artist **Robots** Arun Ram-Mohan, Additional Lighting **Rome** Teh-Wei Yeh, Matchmove Artist **The Santa Clause 2** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist **Scarface (VG)** Maya Zuckerman, Mocap 3D Generalist **Shrek the Third** Rani Naamani, Animator **Shrek the Third (VG)** Samuel Tung, Technical Artist **Sin City** Michael Cozens, Lead Animator **Smallville** Geeta Basantani, Lead Compositor **Speed Racer** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith** Andrew Doucette, Character Animator | Nicholas Markel, Pre-Visualization **Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic (VG)** Arun Ram-Mohan, 3D Artist | Jessica Mih, Level Artist **Stargate SG-1** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositing Artist | Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist | Shawn Walsh, Digital Effects Supervisor **Stargate: Atlantis** Daniel Osaki, 3D Animator | Megan Majewski, 3D Animator | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street** Jami Gigot, Concept Artist **Transformers** Allen Holbrook, Animator | Henri Tan, Creature Technical Director

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SKETCHBOOK
OF IVAN KASHUBO

It's always nice to have an A4 sheet and a pencil at your fingertips – a sudden whim can always be embodied into visible forms and contours...

SKETCHBOOK OF IVAN KASHUBO

DEMONIC

The day I started this image I felt like drawing something demonic. It's pretty fun to invent evil, scary creatures – room for imagination in this area is definitely unlimited! So I launched Photoshop and made a quick sketch, paying minimum attention to detail. It's important when sketching to capture the spirit, silhouette and basic features of your character's personality.

Continuing with the sketch I searched for favourable lighting and shadows. At this stage it was crucial to stress the character's mood. Then the details followed. The ideas and shapes were born in my head throughout the process of drawing, and I tried to transfer them into the picture as precisely as possible.

As I was drawing the demon I gave him such artefacts as chains, pendants, belts and tattoos. All these, I felt, were clear indications of where the creature originated. To finish up the drawing, I added some detail to the background – and the sketch was ready (**Fig.01a - Fig.01e**)!

Fig.01a

Fig.01b

Fig.01c

Fig.01d

KNIGHT

Like many other artists, when I have time I draw sketches just for fun. On this occasion it came to my mind to draw a monster with human anatomy – a big one, with massive muscles. I usually use Painter and Photoshop, but in this case I decided to use Photoshop only. For me, this application is the most flexible and convenient when creating sketches, as well as making a full set of drawings.

For starters, I made a quick linear sketch. In process of drawing I gave the character a mask and a sword. I chose a theatrical posture for the character (so that it looked more expressive). When drawing preliminary sketches I usually don't go into too much detail, as many ideas and shapes come to mind later on.

With the original sketch finished I decided to add some colour and lighting to the character. At this stage everything was based on large colour spots: lights, tones, halftones, shadows. When the general silhouette became

Fig.02a

distinguishable I moved to the details of the mask, body and clothes. I then approached the background. Usually, when I draw a character I pay little attention to its surroundings. I often place my characters onto a white or another neutral background. Sometimes I use background textures, and this was the case with the Knight.

As the final stage I used textures which made the drawing more lively and detailed. I applied the textures with the overlay layer effect: chrome on the mask and the sword (in bright spots), leather (on the belt and the wristlet), and fabric (on the clothes). I then deepened the shadows and brightened the highlighted areas. And done! It was lots of fun drawing this character (**Fig.02a - Fig.02e**).

Fig.02b

Fig.02d

Fig.02e

Fig.02c

PAN SKETCHES

This first drawing was done with pencil on the paper. With this character I wanted to convey the spirit of a demonic warrior. The idea was to merge the warrior's armour with some fantasy evil tones. The character turned out solid, whilst at the same time not over-detailed.

It's always nice to have an A4 sheet and a pencil at your fingertips – a sudden whim can always be embodied into visible forms and contours, like with this second sketch. The idea of this image was something post-apocalyptic. The character was invented quickly and I created the drawing without any excessive complexities. In my view, the resulting drawing was a fairly well-grasped character (**Fig.03a & Fig.03b**).

Fig.03a

Fig.03b

THE TEMPTING SEDUCTION

The theme for this one was witches and vampires. The most difficult thing was to come up with the lively shape. Posture, lighting, and colour – everything had to stress the temperament. Starting the work I decided not to draw the whole figure but rather concentrate on the face. The image of a spiteful, wrinkled old woman came to mind. I made a quick linear sketch in Photoshop and proceeded – in an unusual (for me) way – with the background. It gave me the idea of the general feel of the picture and its lighting. I stopped my choice at the orange-brown gamma, which I thought best suited the character.

The picture implied an old photo with scratches in a vintage style. After the background I started drawing the face; because I had already decided on the colours and lighting, it wasn't difficult to detail the face. I added vampire canines, which made the image look mystical, and went on with further traits: some wrinkles, warts and patterns on fabric to strengthen the witch/vampire appearance. I then flattened all the layers and added contrast and saturation to the image.
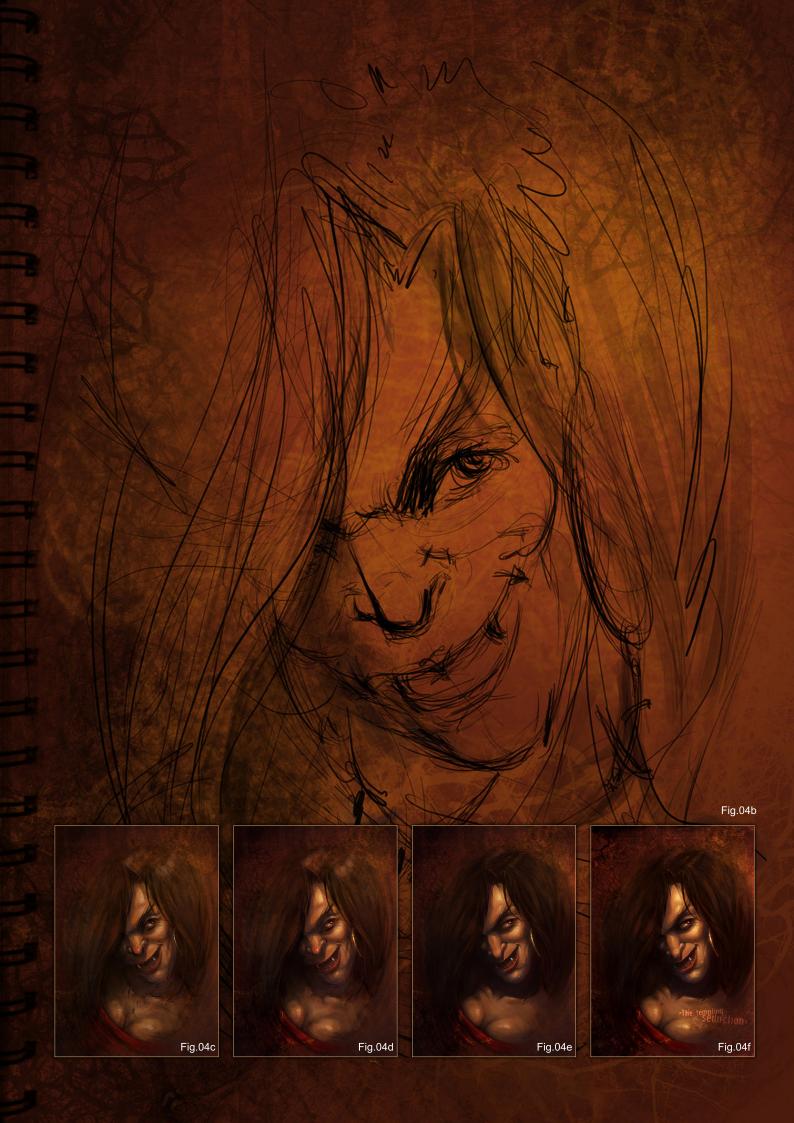
Fig.04a

The whole piece took me no more than three hours (**Fig.04a - Fig.04f**).

Fig.04b

Fig.04c

Fig.04d

Fig.04e

Fig.04f

FAT MAN

I came across this topic quite by accident – a vague idea without any specific character came to mind. This time it was all about searching during the process of drawing. For starters I made up a background texture for the planned sketch. I then moved to the silhouette. The initial intent was to draw a fat, human-like, grinning monster. Having drawn the approximate sketch I started searching for the character's temper: scary face, massive stomach hanging down, and a big, fat bottom – all these elements create an expressive figure.

During the process of drawing, however, I changed the character. The main idea

Fig.05a

Fig.05b

Fig.05c

Fig.05d

Fig.05e

Fig.05f

Fig.06a

Fig.06b

Fig.06c

Fig.06d

Fig.06e

remained, but the malicious monster gave way to a sad man. When you draw a quick sketch, the process of searching for forms and character is really enjoyable. Fast sketching sometimes leads to unexpected results – even for the artist himself. So, as soon as I found the character, I approached the details. I exaggerated his anatomy and, done with the positioning of his arms, moved to the more detailed representation. The tattoo on his shoulder was the finishing detail; I then added some noise to the background and increased the contrast of the picture's lighting. The character turned out rather charismatic!

Special thanks for help with this character must go to my friend, Alexander Ovchinnikov (**Fig.05a - Fig.05f**).

FRANKENSTEIN

Some spare sketch time turned up. After some short reflection on the topic I took to Frankenstein – a cult character, as scary as he is unfortunate. After taking a look at references

I started with a linear sketch. In the next step I took care of the lighting: a bright light to the right, big reflection on the left and the shadow in the middle produced a dramatic mood inherent to the character. After finishing with the greyscale sketch, I moved to tinting the image. This was accomplished very quickly using the "Colour" effect. As the background was red-orange (warm), I made the shadows dark blue (cold). It resulted in a desirable contrast in the lighting.

After basic colours of the character and background were established, I moved onto the details: deepened all the colours, added contrast to the image, stressed the basic lines of the character's expression. Since this was just a sketch, I didn't go too far into details. It was more relevant for me to grasp the mood of the image. In the end I added some noise and texture to the background. I like my sketches to have a vintage appearance as it looks elegant and requires little effort to create (**Fig.06a - Fig.06e**).

FIRE HAND

During the search for a character a lot of different shapes come to mind. The challenge here was to catch the best one and put him onto the canvas as precisely as possible. Sometimes I look through the works of other artists. This helps to select a theme and get some inspiration.

I like drawing monsters. It's always fascinating to create something new and unique with your own imagination and a brush at hand. So when drawing this character I again proceeded from a linear sketch. Some people start from big forms, silhouettes, but I still prefer to begin with lines. After outlining the character's posture, I got to the tinting of the image. At this stage it was convenient to start with greyscale, as you can clearly see the light, halftones, and tones, and you will hardly mess up with colouring using this method.

With the lighting done, I moved onto the details. In this part of the work I often use custom brushes. They allow you to diversify an image and sometimes lead to unexpected results which in turn stimulate new ideas. As this was just a sketch I could have left it as greyscale, but then I found it interesting to stress some details of the image with colour. The character itself was left greyscale, whereas the flaming hand, the jaws in fire, and the smoking eyes were collared red. Such colour accents always look fine and help to draw attention to the notable features (**Fig.07a - Fig.07c**).

Fig.07a

Fig.07b

Fig.07c
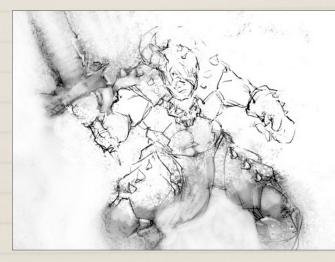
ORC

When I started this drawing I didn't have any particular idea in mind, only a hint of the topic – warrior, knight, battle ... After some short reflection, I leaned towards a fantasy character, somewhat like an orc or ogre. After a quick linear sketch I approached the colour. This time I didn't do greyscale, but immediately moved into colour – the mask, the skin's tint, the outfit and the sword. This stage was akin to the comic style of drawing. Sometimes it's lots of fun deciding the colouring in such a way.

Fig.08a

Fig.08c

Fig.08b

I then leaped into the background. It was a fairly quick-and-rough painting. Once done with the background I reverted to the character. Drawing details is always interesting and involving: the textures of metal, skin, fabric, small pieces of clothing, all these can be perfected for hours. Gradually, the drawing became more and more distinctive.

Once the main character was finished, I returned to the background. Vague tints behind the orc looked somewhat dull, so I decided to enliven the background with some battle signs – dead bodies, spears, flags. I made these details blurred so that they didn't draw attention away from the foreground. In the end, I put a few blood stains on the orc, which also refreshed the image and stressed its basic intention. To finalise, I flattened all the layers and sealed with contrast, saturation and sharpness. And that's all (**Fig.08a - Fig.08f**).

Fig.08d

Fig.08e

Fig.08f

WARLORD

The theme for this was a warlord. This particular day I wanted to draw something brutal and cruel, though not frightening or disgusting. It was to be a powerful character with distinctive muscles and fantasy elements. When I started with the sketch I didn't have an integral form in mind. For starters, I found the warlord's posture and silhouette in black and white. For me, this first stage of drawing is one of the most exciting.

I added details to the armour in the linear manner. During the process of drawing came some weird-looking elements on the back of the character – huge tentacles with spiky tips. I moved to the tinting of the image (bright and dark areas of the composition). I decided to make the background rather bright so that the character appeared dark and thus looked more attractive. Keeping a good eye for contrast is one of the most essential rules of drawing. Interesting drawing is hardly possible without appropriate contrast.

I managed the details: chains, pendants, metal elements of the armour, a sword, and finally the warlord himself. After I finished the details I flattened all the layers and through the background added some "airiness" to the image. It is always important to keep the foreground, middle ground and background dealt with properly. As a final touch, I used Levels, Colour Balance and Hue/Saturation to tweak the image. And done (**Fig.09a - Fig.09f**)!

Ivan Kashubo

For more work by this artist please visit:
http://kashivan.cgsociety.org/gallery/
Or contact them at:
ivankash@mail.ru

Fig.09a

Fig.09b

Fig.09c

Fig.09d

Fig.09e

Fig.09f

THE GALLERY

This month we feature:

Loic e338 Zimmermann

Ioan Dumitrescu aka Jonone

Yigit Koroglu

Frio

Marcin Jakubowski

Sergey Musin

Sergey Vasilev

Simone Maranzana

Cynthia Sheppard

Patrik Hjelm

Credit: www.cat-a-pult.com

Cradle of Life

Frio

http://frioart.ru

frioart@mail.ru

Alchemist's Treehouse

Sergey Vasilev

http://www.cat-a-pult.com

caesar@cat-a-pult.com

Half Her Heart's Duet

Cynthia Sheppard

http://www.sheppard-arts.com

sheppardarts@gmail.com

The Oath

Yigit Koroglu

http://www.yigitkoroglu.com

yigit@yigitkoroglu.com

http://www.yigitkoroglu.com, yigit@yigitkoroglu.com

Clash in the Crystal Skies

Ioan Dumitrescu aka Jonone

jononespo@yahoo.com
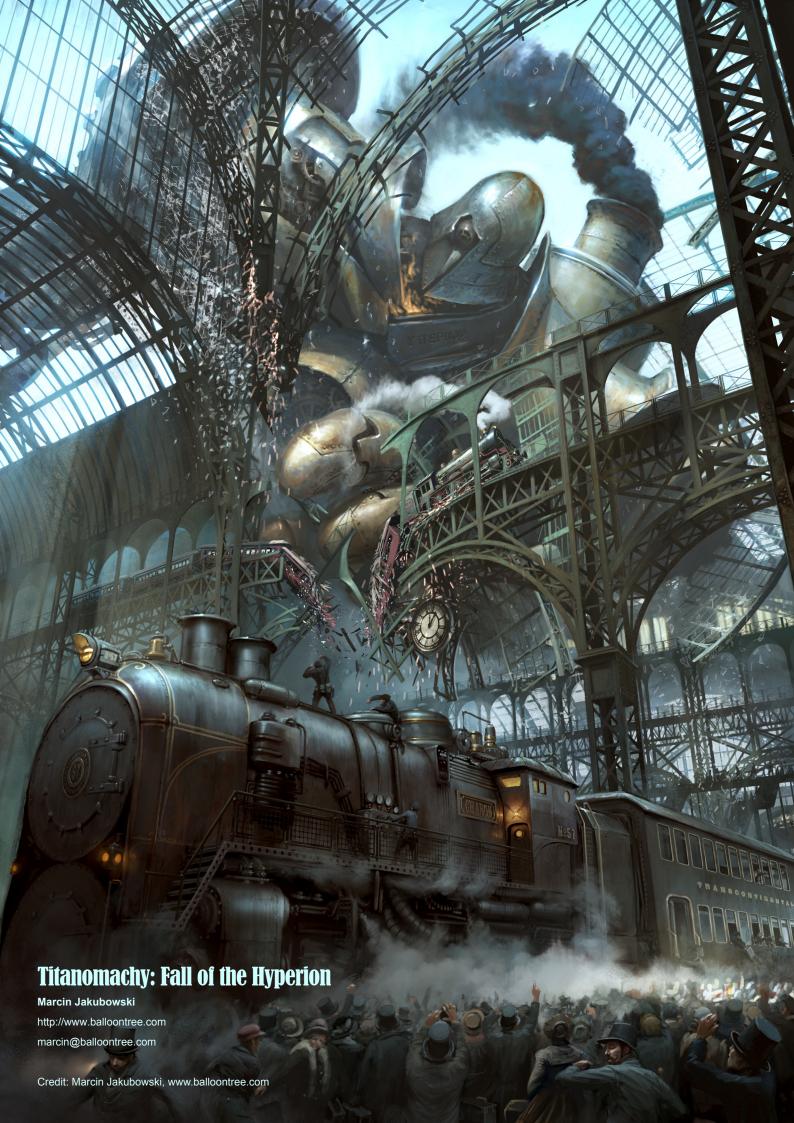
Lizard City Matte

Sergey Musin

http://www.samfx.com

musinart@aol.com

Titanomachy: Fall of the Hyperion

Marcin Jakubowski

http://www.balloontree.com

marcin@balloontree.com

Haunted Church

Simone Maranzana

http://www.simonemaranzana.com

guitarsimo80@yahoo.it

Cthulhu

Patrik Hjelm

http://unidcolor.deviantart.com/

unidcolor@hotmail.com

Cthulhu concept by H. P. Lovecraft

Innocence, Marta

Loic e338 Zimmermann

http://www.e338.com

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Welcome to the Stylised Challenge!

Every month we run this challenge, which is open for anyone to enter. The challenge runs in the conceptart.org forums and winners get to choose prizes and goodies from the www.3dtotal.com shop! They're also featured in this very magazine, where we display the winners from the previous month's challenge, as well as the "Making Of's" from the month before that.

Centaur

Stylised Character challenge

Aviv Or

Stylised Challenge
Centaur

The Challenge

Welcome to the Super Stylised Monthly Challenge. Each month we select a theme and post some images in the **Forum Thread** for reference. All you have to do is to create a 2D image in line with this theme in a stylised / abstract / cartoon style, whilst keeping your image instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2DArtist magazine on how to create stylised images, such as you see in the many feature films and cartoon galleries.

8th

Nathan Stoltenberg - Wafflekoan
nlstoltenberg@gmail.com
http://nstoltenberg.wordpress.com/

7th

Romero

6th

Jason Smith - Macaruba
info@macaruba.com
http://www.macaruba.com

6th

Marc Garcia - Marcuswelbey
two2lions@gmail.com

6th

Albertocubatas

6th

Murdokx

6th

Tolgatanyel

We thought this regular competition might bring in just the images and "Making Of's" that we need, whilst giving away great prizes and exposure. This month's theme was **"Centaur"**. Here you can see the top placed entries, as voted for by the public.

What are we looking for?

Funny and humorous entries which break the theme down to its most recognisable components; emphasise these in whichever ways you think best, and render your stylised / abstract / cartoon masterpiece. The rules are pretty laid back: please submit 1 x 3D render (minor post work is OK); its up to you if you want to have a background; include some graphical

6th

Arturo Aguirre - Artina
artinastudio@gmail.com
http://artinastudio.blogspot.com

5th

Oriol Muñoz Anguera - Urih_pta2
urih.pta2@gmail.com
http://www.urih-pta2.blogspot.com

5th

Richard G.D. Baker - The Antarctican
cirqus@cirqus.com
http://www.cirqus.com

4th

Rvdtor

elements or text on your image. Renders of the 800 pixel dimension sound about right, but the winners will be featured in 2DArtist Magazine, so if you can create some higher res images too then all the better!

There will be one competition per month, with the deadline being the end of the month (GMT). For a valid entry, just make sure your final image is posted in the main competition thread before the deadline. We require the top three winners to submit "Making Of" overview articles that will be shown on either 3DTotal or in 2DArtist Magazine. These need to show the stages of your creation - different elements and some brief explanation text - of why, and how, you did what you did. We will format this into some nice-looking pages to give you some great exposure, and us some quality content. Each competition will have one main thread which starts with the brief at the top. All entrants should post all WIP's, give feedback and generally laugh at the crazy ideas that are emerging each month...

3rd

Felipe Fernández Morell - Bstsk
contactos@ffilustracion.com
http://www.ffilustracion.com

2nd

Jan Pedroietta - Jpedro
jpedro@jpedro.com
http://jpedro.cgsociety.org/gallery/

Challenge Thread

The entire **Centaur** competition can be viewed **Here**

The current challenge at the voting stage is: **Jester (Fool!)**
The current challenge taking place is: **Robots**

To join the next challenge, or to view previous, and / or current entries, please visit: **www.conceptart.org**

Or contact: **Lynette@zoopublishing.com**
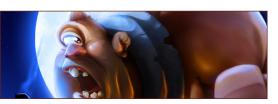
Making Of's

Here are the "Making Of's" from last month's top three winning entries...

3rd Urih pta2

Software Used: Photoshop

This being my second "making of" for 2DArtist's Stylised Challenge, I will admit that I tend to lean more towards the disorganised illustration rather than the stylised design of a character. At the beginning, the subject didn't really catch my attention, but I started to throw some lines down anyway (**Fig.01**). I was pretty much searching for a typical cyclops, such as that by Ray Harryhausen. Lately, I have been inclined to move more towards the macabre in my

Fig.01

Fig.02

drawings, but this time I didn't want to make a morbid image. It was hard for me not to do this, and I didn't quite achieve it completely. You see, the original idea was a cyclops prisoner and a girl running away from a village. The girl was supposed to help the cyclops but in the end it seemed more like the cyclops had kidnapped the little girl!

Once the sketch was done I started to fill it with colour and define the volumes (**Fig.02**). I didn't want a filthy, dirty cyclops so I coloured him with pale colours to make him look nice and clean – no blood, no mud. I was sure that I wanted to play with the lighting in this image; he had a very bare body and I needed the power of light to enhance it.

As I mentioned before, the cyclops was running away with this little girl. The second light was added to the scene to imply a situation where the cyclops is faced with arrows of fire being shot towards him, from behind.
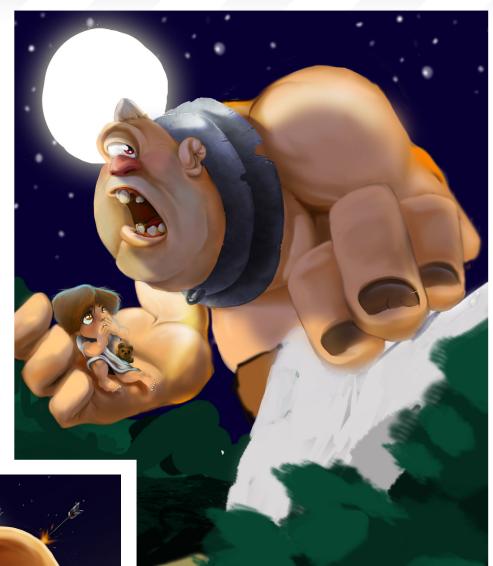
But, little by little, the idea kept changing. People do not usually escape in the daytime, do they? Besides, the second light had to be very strong, so it was not going to work out as I'd imagined. So the sky went dark and everything started to take form from then on: the moon, the village, the arrows, more lighting (**Fig.03**). I multiplied the blue layer in order to give the skin a nocturnal shade at this stage of the painting process.

I didn't like either the forest or the path, they were too forced. So I moved back in time – in terms of the escape – and I placed the pathway in the middle of the village instead. It was an ancient European village, early Medieval, with an enormous moon – this gave me more options to play with second and third light sources (**Fig.04**). The cyclops was saturated with orange in order to get more contrast, and I decided to wait to give the cyclops blue tones. At the end of the work, I make him darker using the same tone of the skin. By re-sizing the image I also

Fig.03

Fig.04

managed to centre the protagonist in the scene. As mentioned before, the girl was supposed to be a friend of the cyclops, but as the illustration advanced, her role changed. The expression of the girl's face shows fear. Finally, I obtained the fairy tale tone with a blue photography filter in Photoshop. In order to contrast the blue I used orange lights produced by the windows in the village. The final idea became a cyclops running away from the village with a girl as his hostage (**Fig.05**).

Thanks for reading – and don't forget to love walls!

Oriol Muñoz Anguera

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http://www.urih-pta2.blogspot.com

Or contact them at:

urih.pta2@gmail.com

Fig.05

2nd Gnahz

Software Used: Flash and Photoshop

Whenever I think of a cyclops, what comes to mind is a half-naked, big, burly, Greek mythological creature, carrying a big hunting club. Since a cyclops has only one eye, I wanted a contrasting creature in the image that the cyclops is hunting.
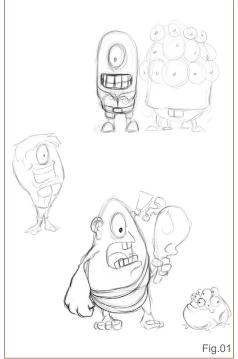
I wanted to break away from my usual creation process of drawing for this round, so most of the work was done in Flash.
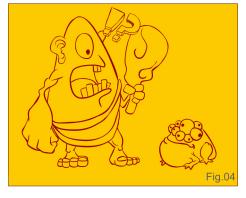
Step 1

I started by making a few sketches and doodles (**Fig.01**) just to find my ideal concept. Generally I like to sketch egged-shaped characters; it looks more comical that way. Finally I settled for the drawing of the blurred-looking cyclops with a multi-eyed creature (**Fig.02**).
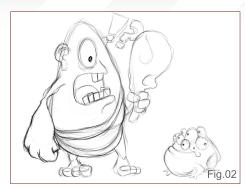
Step 2
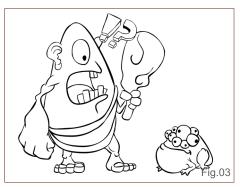
I wanted a vector look for this drawing, so I took the sketch into Flash and traced the outline

Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03

Fig.04

Fig.05

(**Fig.03**). I used the brushstroke tools in Flash to create the outline for this drawing, as they produced some nice thick and thin lines based on the amount of pressure.

Step 3

I wanted a different style to my colouring method for this round of the Stylised Challenge. I changed the red outline to replace the usual black one. I then slapped on a base colour before proceeding with filling the colours in (**Fig.04**).

Step 4

Keeping in mind that I wanted to use just three or four colours to complete the drawing, I chose colours that were in a close range to one other. In this case, the colours used were red, yellow and orange (**Fig.05**). Using the line tool in Flash, I separated the areas that need to be shaded.

Fig.06

Shades of colours were then carefully added at this stage, to create depth and volume. There are no highlights in this drawing, as I wanted to keep it really simple. Shadows were finally added in the last part of this step (**Fig.06**).

Step 5

With the overall drawing almost complete, I decided to create an old poster, worn out kind of look. I was then inspired by the PC game that I was playing at the time, *Fallout 3*! So I took the final image into Photoshop where I added a couple of stock backgrounds I had saved on my computer. I toggled between the blending tools until I reached the desired effect, and then finally, the overall drawing was complete (**Fig.07**).

I hope you have enjoyed the simple making of this fun image. Thanks for reading!

Fig.07

SUPER Stylised Challenge
February 2009
Cyclops

Adrian Zhang

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http://gnahz.deviantart.com/
Or contact them at:
adrian.zhangzhiwei@gmail.com

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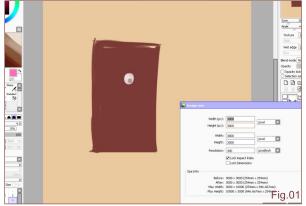
1st Oritey

Software Used: Easy PaintTool SAI and Photoshop
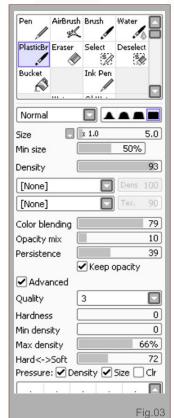
Hello, my name is Oleg Yorkov, a.k.a. Oritey. I am going to describe the process of painting my illustration for the Cyclops challenge, which I have titled "DOOR". The idea to paint the door came to me suddenly, as a flash. I thought about designing an original cyclops ... one way or another, and then, bang! A door as a cyclops! So I quickly began putting the idea to life.

I always paint on a canvas 3000 by 3000 pixels, at 300 dpi and I only use the programme, Easy PaintTool SAI. I just like this programme and I respect its creators. It's very easy to use and painting with it is an absolute pleasure. I fill the canvas with any neutral colour (the colour depends on my feeling at the time), because my eyes hurt if I draw directly on white. I draw my idea with a darker colour than the canvas (**Fig.01**).

For a more interesting story there was a need to add some key objects. I drew some kids lying

Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03

on the floor laughing, as well as painted the wall onto which I added a picture of the door's hands. Some graffiti was also added to the wall, and I felt that I had made a more interesting and clear idea at this stage (**Fig.02**).

When drawing, I hid all layers except for the door, because this was the most important element in the picture which I wanted to detail at this stage. For this purpose I used a brush

Fig.04

that I created, which I call "plasticine", because drawing with it feels like sculpting (**Fig.03**) – I could "sculpt" all day if I was not stopped! Drawing the door I understood that just one door by itself was not very interesting. I therefore decided to make it ugly. Every time I pass by my neighbour's door, I think about what I could do with it. And so I expressed all my love to my neighbours in this project!

Fig.05
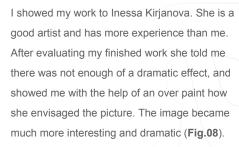
I broke the door's surface to form a mouth; an eye was already present. I also painted some scars onto the "face" of the door (**Fig.04**). Hands showing an incorrect gesture had to be deleted here, and I painted them instead to represent tentacles (**Fig.05**). I felt like some notes should be written onto the wall to make it more believable. At first I wanted to express all my philosophy here, but I decided that not everybody would understand my idea and so I simply wrote, "ME EATS HUMANS!" onto the wall (**Fig.06**).

I continued adding more details to help me create the story. There was a need to draw strewn plaster on the floor, which had fallen from the wall and created the impression of

Fig.07

the tentacles on the wall. I didn't forget to add shadows to make the cracks look more embossed. I then had to make the shadows deeper because they were quite small at this stage. The floor in the hallway were not good;

the tiles were broken and absent in some places because somebody had probably broken/ stolen them. Once again I added some volume; this work was very tedious but I still enjoyed it (**Fig.07**).

I showed my work to Inessa Kirjanova. She is a good artist and has more experience than me. After evaluating my finished work she told me there was not enough of a dramatic effect, and showed me with the help of an over paint how she envisaged the picture. The image became much more interesting and dramatic (**Fig.08**).

In spite of this, I felt a lack of something, and I decided to add some characters to make the story clear. The boys are rolling on the floor laughing at their work on the wall; the girl is angry – I don't think somebody would like it if his or her door was laughed at (**Fig.09**)! For a long time I tried hard to show cute child-like emotions, always trying to express the characters' emotions in such a way as to bring about a smile when looking at them.

I also changed a few features of the door's "face", to make it more emotional (**Fig.10**). I

Fig.08

Fig.09

Fig.10
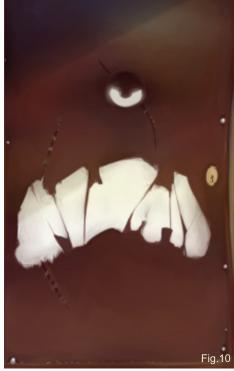
thought that everything was okay at this stage, but Inessa's professionalism rejected the kids – they spoiled the composition and took the focus of attention, diffusing the story and not expressing the idea of the cyclops door. I figured I knew what to do: remove the kids (**Fig.11**). I felt it was a great pity though, but then if I'd attended art school I would know something more about composition, so I trusted

her critiques. Rather than attending art school, instead I used to draw on the walls in hallways and on my neighbour's door, making it look ugly. So if I hadn't missed art school, I never would have painted this picture!

On my part I tried to add more and more detail, but Inessa remained tough, and I knew that I could easily spend all of my energy on extra

detail, removing focus from the main concept – the door. And so, my supply of inspiration was exhausted and the work was finished. The final dashes, under the guidance of Inessa, were some changes in colour, light and shadows; image sharpness was added using "high overpass" filters, and I put a duplicate layer set to Overlay on top, in Photoshop. We decided not to do too many details; we just created a draft dirty shade and light – some yellow, some green, some blue, some red. Then we added some dust into the air as the final touch (**Fig.12**).
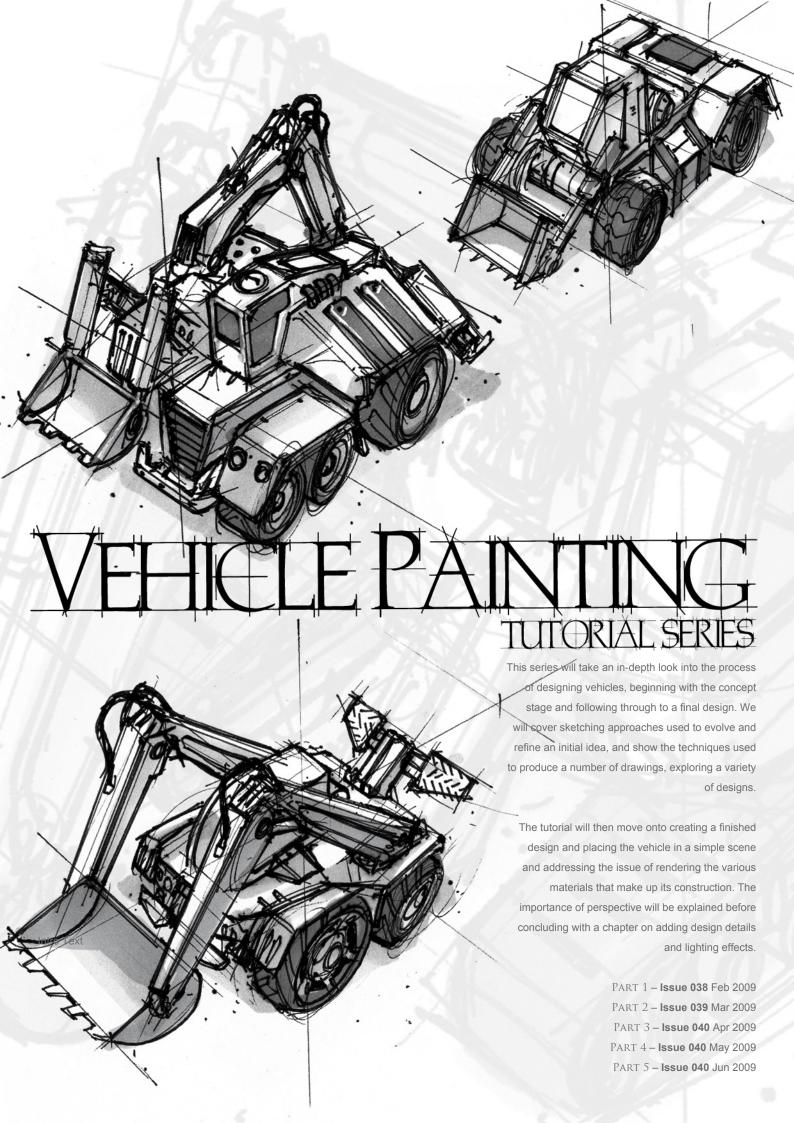
The picture which you are looking at was born as a process of team-work, between a novice illustrator and a professional illustrator. And as a final note: don't do this to your neighbour's door!

Fig.11

Oleg Yurkov (Oritey), with Inesse Kiryanova

For more work by this artist please visit:

http://oritey.ru/

Or contact them at:

oritey@gmail.com

Fig.12

VEHICLE PAINTING
TUTORIAL SERIES

This series will take an in-depth look into the process of designing vehicles, beginning with the concept stage and following through to a final design. We will cover sketching approaches used to evolve and refine an initial idea, and show the techniques used to produce a number of drawings, exploring a variety of designs.

The tutorial will then move onto creating a finished design and placing the vehicle in a simple scene and addressing the issue of rendering the various materials that make up its construction. The importance of perspective will be explained before concluding with a chapter on adding design details and lighting effects.

VEHICLE PAINTING
PART 4 - FINAL DESIGN

Created In: Photoshop

In my final part of this tutorial series we will get into colour and setting up a scene. I drew my car in perspective to understand the form and to give a general sense of what it looks like. Now I will move onto drawing it a more dynamic way. I'm going to set it up in a scene as if it's racing or parked in a garage. I want the car to look more real, so I will draw it from the perspective of having taken a picture of it through a camera (**Fig.01**). When you draw things more from the

Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03

Fig.04
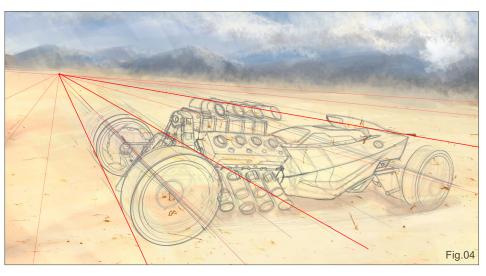
top it can sometimes look like a toy, so I find drawing it at a lower angle is best, from a more of a realistic point of view.

So I take my rough line drawing and clean it up now. I then take my cleaned line sketch and place some quick guide lines for perspective (**Fig.02**). I lay out my perspective guidelines to line up the background and make sure it is sitting on the right ground plane.

I decide to place my car in the desert, as if it's a Bonneville Salt Flats car. As you can see, I have refined the car a little more and modernised the body of it. So now I make my canvas fairly big, lay in some ground that looks like sand, and I add some mountains in the distance to provide some additional interest (**Fig.03**). As this piece is more about showing off the vehicle design and less about the scene, I really make sure that the vehicle is the centre piece for the scene.
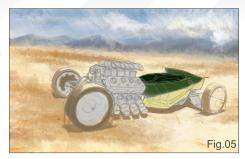
I decide to really crop the picture in at this point to focus more on the vehicle. I add some sky tones, clouds and some texture details to the
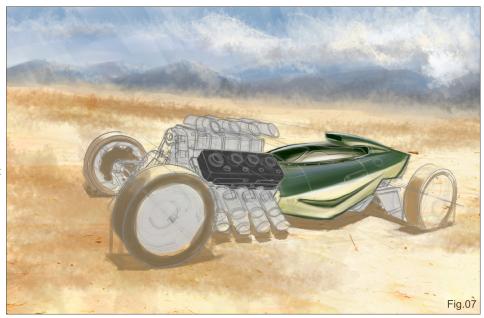
ground. I try to keep this really quick because it is more about the vehicle and not the scene. I take the sketch and make it darker in tone so that I can see everything going on in the car (**Fig.04**). The blue just wasn't helping anymore.

I remove the perspective guidelines now and start to work in some colour. I leave my sketch on one layer and start colouring under the sketch. As I define more of the car I will move on top of the sketch to pretty much eliminate the line drawing. I decide to go with the green colour because it is kind of inspired by WWII aircrafts. I also start with a grey for the engine area, just to lay in some tone (**Fig.05**).

I start to define the cockpit area more here and put the horizon line and sky tones on the top (**Fig.06**). One trick when you're rending a vehicle in a scene is to match the colour of the ground with the tyres. Just go slightly darker to define the difference between the object and material. It will look like it is part of the scene pretty quickly. It wouldn't look right if I went in and made the tyres solid black

Fig.05

Fig.06

Fig.07

against the sand colour. They would look too clean, as if the car has been dropped into the scene as opposed to having been driven there through all the dirt.

So here I start to lay down some other colours for the engine (**Fig.07**). It would look very dull and boring to make the whole thing metal. You can have various kinds of metal as well; shiny chrome, dull flat metal, brushed metal etc. So you can use that to break up the engine so it doesn't look like one solid chunk of metal. I decide to make the top intake area shiny chrome, so I lay in some sky tones and ground planes (**Fig.08**). See the rendering material example in **Fig.08a** for a typical way to render chrome

Fig.08

1 Sky tones / Horizon / Ground — Brushed or non shiny metal

3 Tyre

2 Sky tones / Horizon / Ground — Rendering Chrome

4 Green Paint

Fig.08a

Fig.09

and other materials. I also keep adding to stuff into the environment. I do that because I am thinking of the composition and how best to incorporate the vehicle into the environment.

I add quite a bit to the engine area and break it up into different colours and materials to give it interest (**Fig.09**). I still use my engine references while rendering the engine, just so I can see what details I need to have there to make it look believable (**Fig.09a & Fig.09b**). I modernise the engine a bit to push it out into the future. I also keep working on the body of the car to keep refining it. I put the lighter colour on the bottom because it is reflecting the colour of the sand up into the body. Then I make the top darker because it is reflecting the blues of the sky. (See **Fig.08a** again for explanation of rendering the paint.)

I am still focusing on the engine area of the car and adding details and small material break ups (**Fig.10**). I am also starting to show a process called "vignetting" (*vin-yet-ing*). This is when you make things fade out from the closest object to you.

As the front wheel and engine is the part of the car that is closest to me, I focus my detailing and colour saturation on those areas. Everything from there fades out. This really helps the eye flow over the vehicle and saves time when rendering. It also helps keep your vehicle from looking flat or "pasted" into the scene. You don't need to render every single detail to get your point across!

Fig.09a

Fig.09b

Fig.10

Fig.11

Fig.11a

Fig.12

Fig.13

Fig.14
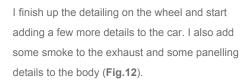
At this stage I pull some photo scraps from one of my hot rod photos and place it onto my car (**Fig.11a**). I take an existing wheel and modify it as this saves time and also gives me a very precise and defined wheel instantly (**Fig.11**). One thing on a vehicle that is very important is the wheels. If they are not very defined wheels, or not drawn correctly, it can quickly ruin a cool vehicle. I just take a wheel that is close to the perspective I need, and skew it into the right perspective using the Transform tools in Photoshop.

I finish up the detailing on the wheel and start adding a few more details to the car. I also add some smoke to the exhaust and some panelling details to the body (**Fig.12**).

The wheel in the back is taken from the same photo (see **Fig.11a**), but I use the back wheel of the car instead of the front. I don't spend to much time on the back wheel because I want the front wheel to have most of the detail. I then add further detail to the back suspension to make it look more complete. I use a soft brush to go over the back wheel as well, to make it look dustier and to push the wheel back (**Fig.13**).

The car looks a little strange just sitting there on its own, and so I add a driver sitting on the

Fig.15

rear wheel (**Fig.14**). Again, I'm still leaving the focus on the vehicle and I place the character in a position where he is not the main focal point. I also work on the far front wheel, adding just enough detail to give some indication of parts and a possible brake system like a street bike. Again, I'm not putting a lot of focus on that area – just enough to indicate that something is there.

I work on the driver a little more here, giving him some type of vintage suit and goggles, almost as if he's a fighter pilot that drives this car (**Fig.15**).

I decide here to put a logo from my book, *Masters of Chicken Scratch,* on the side of the vehicle. It has a kind of vintage feel, and is a

logo you might see on a World War II aircraft. I also lay down some dust over the driver so he becomes part of the scene. I then adjust the background a little and turn up the contrast a touch; I felt it was a little too muted (**Fig.16**). The logo is skewed and placed on the side of the vehicle. I also use the Warp tool in Photoshop to give it the curvature to match the body. I continue to add details to the body, like rivets, and refine the areas around the cockpit (**Fig.17**).

I add some more detail and contrast to the ground around the car here (**Fig.18**), just to lead the eye through the whole piece. I start adding a car in the background that is racing through the desert. When cars race out there they rarely race alone - they all have to have buddies. It also adds more action and interest to the piece.

I add some tyre tracks to the sand so it looks like the car has just rolled up and parked. This adds realism to the piece and makes sure that it

Fig.16

doesn't feel like the car was just dropped there. I then decide the shadow looks a little dead and I could add some colour in this area. When you have warm light from above, the shadow will be a cool colour, so I add some purple in there. This is the final piece. I decide to crop it down a little more because I don't need all that background. I like the long, narrow look when working on a car piece. Like I said before, it's all about the vehicle and not so much about the background.

Rendering Material

In the material rendering demo shown in **Fig.08a**, I show the similarities and differences of each material. Chrome always reflects its surrounding environment, just like a mirror. The green shiny paint is similar to the chrome but it is using all green hues. Then if you render dull metal, the sky, horizon and ground all blend a little. Just compare the shiny chrome to the dull metal. I've also done the tyre, or rubber material. You can see that it's not shiny

Fig.17
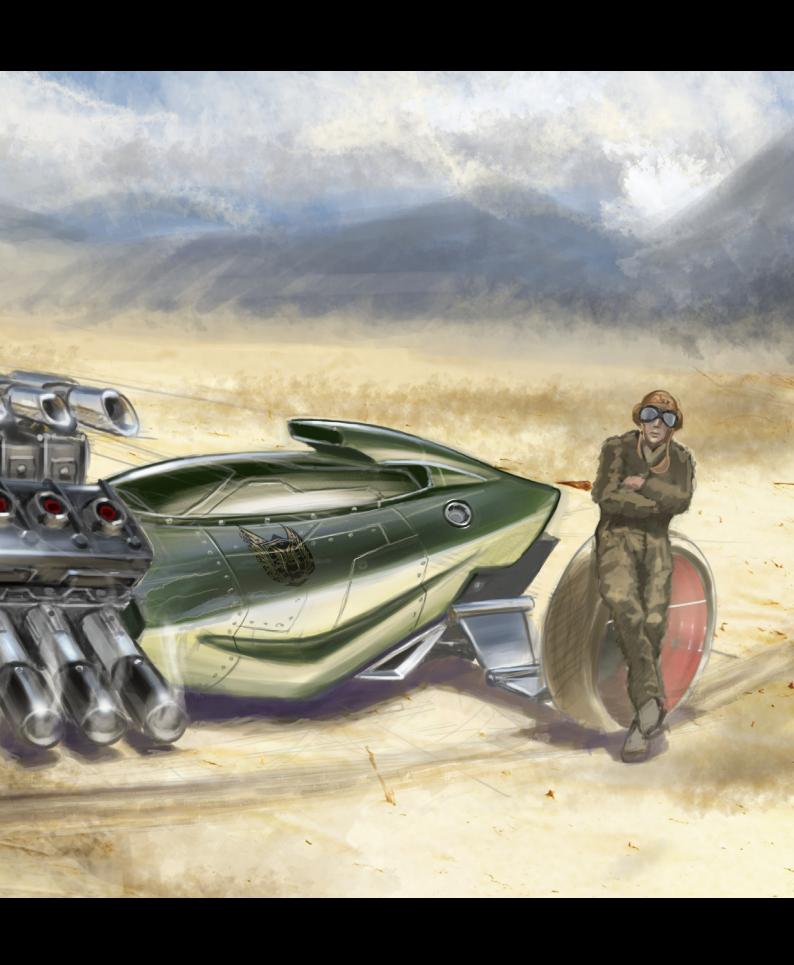
because the sky, horizon and ground all blend together, just giving enough indication of where the sky, horizon and ground are. I also used cylinders to render because most car shapes are complicated cylinders. So you will have your sky tone on top, your horizon in the middle and your ground tone below. Then you just take your horizon and bend it around the curves and different surfaces of your automobile or vehicle.

Thanks for checking out my final tutorial chapter. If you would like to see more work by me then please visit: www.futureelements.net or www.hotrodartbook.com. Hoi Mun Tham will be back with the final chapter of this tutorial series in the June issue.

Thanks for reading!

Fig.18

SPEED PAINTING

Welcome to the Speed Painting section of the magazine. This month we've asked two artists to produce a speed painting based on a simple, one-line brief. Here we feature the final paintings and the overview of the creation processes.

This month our talented artists, Nick Oroc and Dwayne Vance, tackle the topic:

The Sleepy Village
never saw the horror approaching

Nick Oroc

Created In: Photoshop

Hello, I'm back again with another speed painting tutorial challenge, where this time, "The sleepy village never saw the horror approaching" is the subject matter to tackle. My first thoughts on this subject were to take, yet again, a comical approach. From the get go I wanted a figure in the scene, although it contradicts the title a bit, but what the heck! There must be at least one survivor to pass down the stories.

I call this piece "CLOVER SLUG!" inspired by the movie, *Cloverfield*. Again this kind of contradicts the title, but let's just say that this is one fast moving giant alien slug! I off with a fast 20 minute sketch in pencil, which I then scan into Photoshop (**Fig.01**).

On top of this image I create a folder in the Layers window and set it in Multiply mode. I add a new layer in it to create this painterly base texture (**Fig.02**). By setting this folder to Multiply

Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03
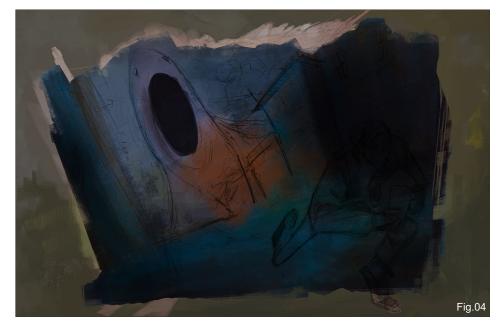
mode, it allows me to see my under drawing while I lay down my base colours, before going into full opaque colouring. Think of it as colour stained glass that allows you to glaze colours over your drawing without losing it (**Fig.03**).

I continue to glaze my colours by blocking all objects and characters in a fairly mid-dark value range. I personally find it easier starting off with darker values and slowly punching out details as I increase in lighter values. This method can be applied to any scenery (i.e. outdoor lighting, indoor, an overcast day, etc.); it's a matter of finding the right values to start off with. There really is no trick to it, except to make sure you don't lose your line drawing. If you do go too dark in value, then you risk the chance of losing your line drawing. So take your time finding the right value that suits your scene. In this case, mid-dark cooler colours suit my night scene, complimented with warmer colours in the explosion (**Fig.04 & Fig.05**).

Once I've laid all my base colours, this is where the fun starts and I set myself in cruise control. At this point it's just a matter of colour-picking and increasing the colours in value as I start

Fig.04

punching out details. But make sure you don't get too carried away by bringing out details in the whole scene. Do so by paying close attention to your focal point and adding details in the sweet spots. In this case I have two: Big Slugo who is being lit by the explosion of the building he's crushed, and the man lit by a street light that he's running towards (**Fig.06**).

At this point, after feeling comfortable with the lit scene, all the necessary details on the buildings,

Fig.05

Fig.06

Fig.07

Fig.08

and Slugo, I decide to introduce some explosion particles, smoke, and dense fog in the air to add some atmospheric depth. In a lit scenario like this I find it easier to add all my bright values first, such as the warm yellows, magentas and oranges, and then use a custom brush to quickly spray the scene with dark valued, abstract particles. At this distance one dark value will suffice, which creates a nice sense of contrast (**Fig.07**).

In this phase I'm basically heading towards home base and it's just a matter of completing the frightened rocker character. I pay close attention to warm verses cool tones on his face. On the right side I bring out warm tones, complementing it with cooler tones on the left, created by the cool lit sky. I always try to avoid painting too monochromatically – unless an image calls for it. Think of painting in Yin Yang: cool complimented by warm. If your main light source is warm, then add a bit of cool on the opposite side of your subject matter, and vice versa (Fig.08).

Once I'd completed the illustration I realised things were a bit too dull – but nothing a simple

Fig.09

Curves adjustment won't solve! In this case I want to slightly saturate and warm up all my warm values without losing my blues. By using Curves and adjusting the red channel only, my blue values stay safe (**Fig.09**).

To complete this image as fast as I can, I simplify my brush set from my custom brush collection, as follows (**Fig.10**):
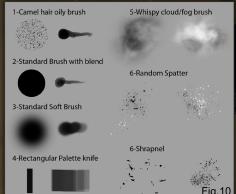
1 – I believe this one comes with Photoshop, but I might be wrong. I've lost track with all the brushes I've created over the years!

2 & 3 – Standard Photoshop brushes

4 – A simple rectangular brush, great for painting angular shapes, such as buildings, windows, etc.

5 – A custom fog/cloud brush I use religiously when it comes to foggy, cloudy effects

6 – Surprisingly, I didn't use this brush, but if I did it would've been in the explosion for some added sparks. Oh well, maybe next time!

7 – This is my particle/shrapnel brush I used in the explosion. 3-4 strokes pretty much did the job!

Well, I hope you find this tutorial helpful because I had real fun doing it. This was supposed to be a three hour speed painting but ended being 3:20 minutes long. I hope 2DArtist Magazine doesn't punish me for this – cheers!

Nick Oroc

For more from this artist visit:

http://www.nickorocart.com/

Or contact:

nickoroc@gmail.com

1-Camel hair oily brush

5-Whispy cloud/fog brush

2-Standard Brush with blend

6-Random Spatter

3-Standard Soft Brush

4-Rectangular Palette knife

6-Shrapnel

Fig.10

Nathaniel West

Created in: Photoshop

For this exercise, I've chosen to do a relatively calm setting, and to have the horrific area be more of a second read. It's a promise of impending doom to come, instead of doom that has already arrived. This sketch will be more about colours, values, and overall composition, rather than details. This allows me work out an idea that can then be reworked with additional details in order to make it a finished piece.
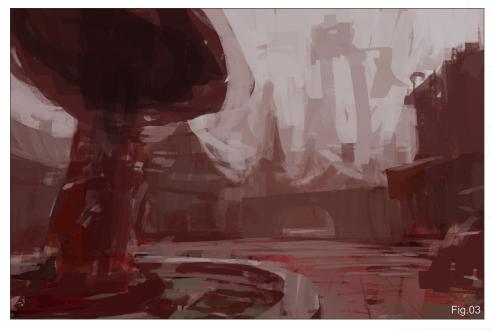
Step 1

I first start by laying in a wash of colour onto the canvas. I want this background colour to act as my initial midtone, where I will develop both lights and darks from it. Any colour will do, but something orange or red is always popular, so I've gone with that option (**Fig.01**).

Step 2

Next, I begin to lay in a lighter and cooler colour for the sky. You can barely make out some

Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03

roof top shapes in the negative space of the sky colour. This doesn't need to be exact at the moment, as I'm simply getting a feel for how I'm going to organise my values into large shapes that are easy for the eye to read.

I then decide to add in a scribbling of a darker mass, which will end up being a fountain in the centre of the village. For the water, I pick up some of the sky colour, which also helps to tie the upper and lower portions of the painting together nicely. At this point I'm already starting to get a feel for the composition and the overall lighting direction (**Fig.02**).

Step 3

Next I continue by working out the perspective of the scene, and I block in more defined shapes. I'm staying very loose and sketchy with things, as I don't want to get too specific. For contrast and visual interest, I decide to add a slightly green compliment to the palette to represent some lily pads in the fountain. This contrast will also help to make the fountain a focal point to the scene, and the horror part will be a secondary read for the viewer (**Fig.03**).

Fig.04

Step 4

I continue to refine the forms further, adding in a suggestion of figures holding up the fountain basin, and putting loose details on the buildings. In the background I roughly indicate some sort of multi-headed serpent creature way off in the distance. I decided to help pull out the fountain from the buildings behind it by adding in a splash of red from the under painting. It helps to draw the eye towards that area once again. A few more dots and dashes on the village buildings to suggest beams, awnings, and street decoration are some of the vital pieces of information I need in front of me, and I can now begin to detail and refine this piece (**Fig.04**).

Step 5

I've decided to make the scene appear cooler. The image is too red and warm for my eye. I overlay some photos that have cooler palettes, which quickly changes the mood of the scene. One of the photos has some remnants of snow in it, and so I decide to add some indications of snow throughout. I also lay in a photo of stones onto the ground in order to get the idea across in a timely manner without painting in every stone (**Fig.05**).

Step 6

I feel that the right side of the painting needs a bit more room, so I extend the canvas out a bit

Fig.05

Fig.06

Fig.07

and then detail out the building. The process I use for this area is to find a photo that inspires me, and then I lay it over the painting and adjust it to fit the perspective. I then paint over it to loosen it up a bit and to keep it sketchy. Once again, this process allows me to quickly get the idea across, rather than painting the whole building from scratch. I also continue to add in more traces of snow throughout (**Fig.06**).

Step 7

I repeat the same photo manipulation process with the buildings on the left, and then spend

some time indicating the monster in the background and adding in some more detail to the buildings in the distance (**Fig.07**).

Step 8

Next, I focus my attention on the fountain, where I've decided to add in some icicles to break up the dark shape of the basin. At this point I feel the sketch is just about complete, so I wrap things up by adding a few more indications and highlights throughout the painting.

And we're done (**Fig.08**)!

Nathaniel West

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Or contact:

nathaniel@nathanielwest.net

Fig.08

For professionals by professionals

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Mainworks is a highly specialized cgi, artwork and postproduction service provider for industry, photographers and agencies. The optimal interaction between CGI and photography demands an extremely high surface quality and details of the 3D models. The modelling software we use has to be reliable and easy to use. PowerNurbs gives us all that and it integrates well into our cgi workflow. At Mainworks we are about cool pictures. Therefore only the best and most straightforward tools are good enough for us.

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Photography backplate: Joris van Velzen (www.razum.com) cgi & postproduction: www.mainworks.de

"On one hand, the movie and gaming industries have digital pipelines in place that would lead one to conclude, perhaps, that it is simplest to have a purely paperless setup and production. On the other hand, there is something tactile and almost primeval about writing, drawing and reading from paper"

SPACE PAINTING

SPACE PAINTING
PART 11: MINING THE ASTEROID FIELDS

Created Using Traditional Tools:

Pilot G-Tec C4 0.4, 0.25; Letraset Pantone: Cool grey 1, 3, 5, 7; Letraset Promarkers: Ice grey 1, 2, 3, 4; Copic layout markers: 1, 3, 5, 7; Copic wide markers: 3, 7; Prismacolor markers: cool grey 30%, 50%, 70%; Letraset bleed proof marker pad A4; Xerox - 100g/m squared A4 Colotech +

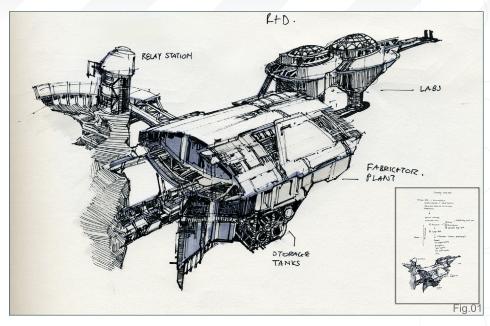**Digital Tools:**

Adobe Photoshop

Introduction

We have finally reached the penultimate chapter in our year-long space painting series. We have traversed various methods of contemporary and futuristic space habitation, looked at the construction of space vessels, and even had an in-depth view of the chaos of a space battle. In this chapter, let's examine the aspects of a more civilian nature.

Overview: Vision of the Everyday Future

Let's imagine a few hundred years from now, when mankind will have achieved the collective willpower and growth to band together in the universal spirit of exploration, and start down the journey of travelling to the nearby stars. Throughout the everyday life of this seemingly

Fig.02

Fig.01

unlimited vastness of unexplored space, this represents the new Wild Wild West; living life on the space frontier.

Let us look at our future brethren and imagine what everyday life could be, such as the mining of an asteroid field. And using that backdrop, discuss the issue of asset generation, i.e. the behind the scenes methodology of idea generation and the production of set designs that could be applied on a movie set/virtual 3D effects/game environment.

I: Imagining the Mundane

In this penultimate chapter, my thoughts are to steer us perhaps on a more retro science fiction route. This means exploring good old science fiction shapes; chunky and bold facets/planes mixed with extrusions of semi exposed pipes, cabling and gold foil. Translated into game/movie speak: the visual direction is retro sci-fi, with hints of *Space: 1999* and flairs of Syd Mead and Joe Johnston (**Fig.01**).

Paper Pixels

Coincidentally, this genre lends itself well to more conservative tools, such as the Renaissance PDA (i.e. pen/pencil/markers/ink washes and a sketchpad). This brings to the fore a current battle, if you will, about the transition and argument for/against the

use of traditional versus digital methods of communication. On one hand, the movie and gaming industries have digital pipelines in place that would lead one to conclude, perhaps, that it is simplest to have a purely paperless setup and production. On the other hand, there is something tactile and almost primeval about writing, drawing and reading from paper.

Indeed, one could argue that the preparatory aspects of initial ideas and pre-production lends itself well to the more traditionalist methods of creation. One could brainstorm and generate a whole universe on the back of a paper napkin, from the crudest gesticulation to an intricately rendered mothball. There is something to be said about the use of paper...

One could hypothesise that one day there will be advanced facsimile methods of recreating digital alternatives to traditional tools, that a paper alternative could be recreated using clever nanites (armies of nanobots) and augmented reality (virtual reality imaging onto portable personal optical devices) applications. Indeed, humankind could advance so far as to one day look back and perceive the use and application of paper as a rare commodity or antiquity, and yet ... there is something alluring about reading a book anywhere, everywhere, with batteries not included.

Retro Reconstruct

There is a saying, "Courses for horses", or "There are no rules. Only tools", as Glen Vilppu is one to say. In my mind, I tend to amalgamate it all as "Tools for fools".

Without quite getting into the debate of which digital software or best broomstick to use for such space art materials, I can only highly recommend the right tool for the right job. Sometimes this means learning new techniques, applying different media or a cross application of tools, and sometimes it's applying yourself using the best skills that you currently have at your disposal to get the job done. It does not need to be the best sliced wedding cake in the universe, or even an impeccably baked tart with a crispy underside that is neither too hard like concrete or soggy overall. More importantly, it is about knowing your limitations and ability to deliver for the job at hand.

And thus, we arrive back at tools. Retro tools, namely the pen, paper and the ink wash. I love still being able to wield the pen and paper when it comes to sketching down a draft idea. The pen is such an unforgiving medium in normal circumstances (impossible for producing clean character faces and features without a deft, experienced hand); however, if harnessed appropriately, provides benefits primarily being:
  • They are permanent (and fast staining)
  • They apply well with alcohol-based markers
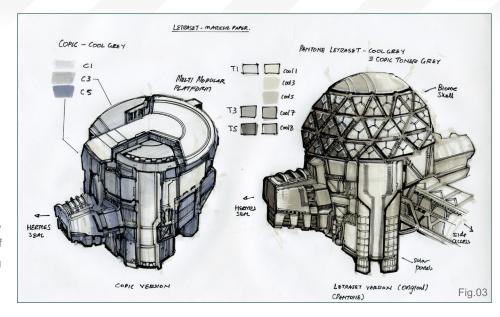
Retro Tools

The objective here is to introduce traditional tools, marker types and uses. With reference to **Fig.02**, there are a range of weapons for the retro minded, starting from the left to right:

Water Based Markers
  • **Uni POSCA** – water based poster markers; work well on porous surfaces such as wood, cork and polystyrene

Alcohol Based Markers
  • **Letraset Markers** – there are three

Fig.03

ranges: originally Letraset Pantone (featured three different nibs and refillable inks, now obsolete), and subsequently evolved into the novice/beginner range; Promarkers (cheap, cheerful and great) and the Tria marker range (expensive, require refill cartridges, and fall apart ... all the time)
  • **Copic Marker** – Japanese standard flag bearer; comes in normal size (Copic Layout: fat nib/thin nib), wide size (Copic Wide: singular fat nib) or Copic Ciao (beginner range: fat nib/brush nib)
  • **Prismacolor Markers** – great dual nib marker range, only available from the US (or on export), affordable and features a great set of cool greys

Pen
  • **Pilot G-Tec C4 Pen** – ranges from 0.4 (0.2mm) down to 0.25 (0.1mm) and provides some of the best fine tips for use in illustration. The colours favoured for traditional sketching or illustration are black and brown

Paper (What is not apparent is the type of papers used, which are namely):
  • **Marker proof paper** e.g. Letraset
  • **Colour copier paper** e.g. Xerox Colotech+

If you are located in the US, Canada and

Asia, the chances are your local markers are: Prismacolor markers (predominantly) or the Letraset markers. If you are located in Central Europe and Japan, your local markers will be: Letraset (predominantly) and Copic markers.

Space Biomes: Marker vs. Marker Test

When comparing the leading markers against one another:

  • **Prismacolors and Copic** – feature comparable cool grey sets
  • **Letraset** – the old pantone series is comparable to Copic toner greys, and are warmer overall
  • **Letraset Promarkers** – the hidden champion of the series; aimed at beginners, it is affordable and works very well. No refill, however. For a comparable grey value to the Prismacolors/Copics, use the ice grey range

Let's test these markers out by designing a set of retro sci-fi biomes modules. These would realistically represent horticultural living spaces to grow trees, plants, and life within space. A great example of such an enclosure is embodied by the Eden Project (Cornwall, UK), or the large enclosures such as Kew Gardens, London.
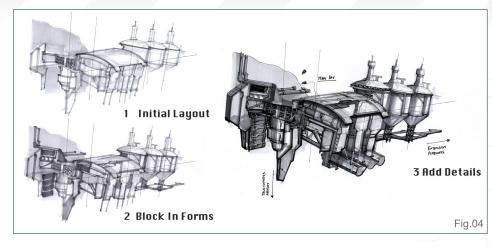
In a direct comparison (**Fig.03**) we can view the effect of using Copics vs. Letrasets cool greys. Notice how warm the Letraset default

cool greys are in comparison to the Copics. With various experiments, we have found that these Letraset greys are equivalent to the Copic toner grey range. In addition, using marker paper (A4 Letraset) combined with markers provides a richer range of values, and soaks up less marker than conventional A4 paper. However, it also tends to leave semi-opaque residues and brings out a sharp contrast in the inks on the markers (especially if one were heavy handed).

The solution to this is to upgrade to modern technology. Colour copier paper, designed for colour laser jets/ink has a much smoother surface and retains marker ink brilliantly. Our next image sequence features the cheaper Letraset ice grey markers, but note how much more brilliantly the grey values and ink lines are retained…

II: Living Amongst Asteroids

The next aspect is to visualise a future life amongst asteroids. What very few people know is that asteroids are an amazing resource of raw materials, rare metals and water. Therefore they are an ideal place for mining, exploration and a way station to the stars.

The second part of this workshop concentrates on two aspects: firstly the construction of a base of operations, and secondly, based around developing a mining rig, or in this instance a

1 Initial Layout

2 Block In Forms

3 Add Details

Fig.04

hero transport (instead of characters) as the aspect of mining and coring asteroids will be akin to using deep sea submersibles for work underwater, except in this instance we have the harsh temperature and pressure extremes of space.

Interplanetary/intergalactic space is a dangerous environment filled primarily with gas, dust, cosmic rays, small meteors, and (non-perfect) natural vacuum, matter, dark matter, EM radiation, and so forth. As such, even with futuristic protection suits, advancement would probably not be able to account for the random small meteorite or debris that may escape local tracking sensors and devices, and may be akin to a high velocity projectile tearing through one's deep space protection suit. It would be far better to navigate space within a personal deep space environmental vehicle, that is small enough to manoeuvre in confined spaces, but robust

enough to withstand the rigours of outer space, barring planetary re-entry.
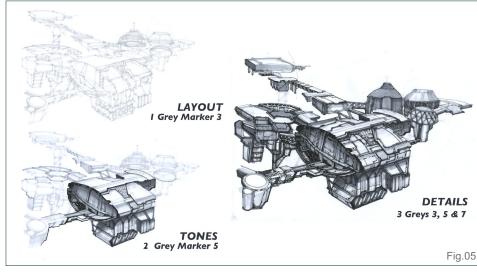
Constructing a Base of Operations

The objective here is to construct a deep space base/way station using industrial design principles. The initial construction of a base will require consideration of the following:

Main Base (as seen in **Fig.01**)

- Basic housing
- Life support system
- Power generation
- Propulsion
- Resource storage
- Analysis and utilisation
- All purpose tool shed

Once a purpose-built base is installed/hauled into position, these bases should be adequately self sufficient to harvest and manufacture their own equipment from local resources. As such, the base would require:

- **Prefabrication and manufacturing module**
- **Manufacturing** – transport, tools, robotics, nanobots, gene sequencer, wiring, and various modules according to local blueprints
- **Biomes** – local growth and sustainability of local food and produce, generation, purification and entrapment of beneficial gasses, primarily components of air (oxygen, nitrogen +/- carbon dioxide)
- **Transport hangar module** – storage, repair and launch of local mining rigs and protective deterrents

LAYOUT
1 Grey Marker 3

TONES
2 Grey Marker 5

DETAILS
3 Greys 3, 5 & 7

Fig.05

• **Weapons and defence module**

• **Advanced life support systems**

• **Energy storage and generators** –
including
advanced solar panels, mirrors and local
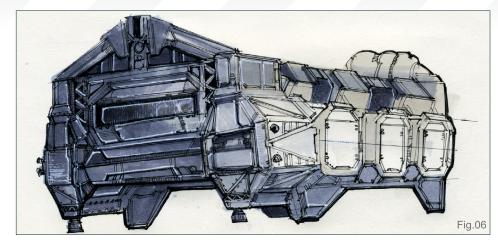propulsive/non-propulsive reactors

Asteroid Shell – Prototype Base

To produce a preliminary base, let's explore
this as a marker design using colour copier
paper and Letraset ice grey markers (affordable
enough to use once). The main premise of this
sketch is a prototype base attached to a large
asteroid that is being hollowed out and fit for
purpose. The beauty of using a large enough
asteroid to manufacture and install a base in is
the ability to use it as a natural shield against
the elements.

In the 1960s, Roy Scarfo and Dandridge Cole
conceived the use of a hollowed out asteroid
as an asteroid shell. Using a nuke melter or
plasma cutter, you could hollow out a base of
operations that could be fitted with an inflatable
liner and some airlocks to recreate living and
breathable environments. The initial issue is
the fallout of radiation from nuclear based tools,
and the interiors leftover would appear glossy
and smooth. A surface depth of 3-4 metres is
sufficient to eliminate most (90%) of cosmic
rays and thus is a sustainable and long standing
option for the future. For now, the global and
economic financial issues to investigate and
manufacture such technology for asteroids is
perhaps a non-option, but nevertheless the
ability to do so is not too farfetched a thought.
Only the means of doing so in a repetitive and
sustainable manner are the remaining obstacles
preventing humankind from living a space life.

Using a simple three-step approach, we can
build the base as follows (**Fig.04**):

• **Initial layout** – Plot perspective lines and
layout; try not to apply much tone in this
step, it is primarily to apply proportions and
serve as a guide
• **Block In forms** – Lathe in your general

Fig.06

design features: base, hangar, a set of
cylindrical biomes and connectors
• **Add Details** – Pen in your designs, apply
thicker line-weight in areas of ambient
occlusion (shadows)

Asteroid Shell – Advanced Use

The next aspect is to expand this base to
provide a full set of operations (**Fig.05**).
Using the same three-point method, this is an
opportunity to refine the overall design.

Utilising the initial vision detailed in the sketch
in **Fig.01**, let's expand the base to incorporate a
full complement of modules: base, life support,
biomes, alternative power supply, manufacturing
and transport hangar, multiple docking ports ...
the list is endless.

Alternatively, you may approach the design of
an environmental set piece as follows:

• Layout
• Tones
• Details

Such a method requires rapid use of markers
over a 15-20 minute period because markers
dry a lighter tone than when wet; due to the
alcohol base the ink will evaporate to stain into
its set form. To provide a smooth transition you
may utilise blender solutions, which are varying
degrees of almost medical grade ethanol. 70%
proof ethanol is normally used in hand gels for
sanitation, and ethanol procured in the local
pharmacy is almost 99% proof ethanol (not for

human consumption), and can be used as a
nice alternative if you don't have any blender
solution at hand. Essentially, the marker blender
releases ethanol that allows a lighter stain of
marker to be released, and thus may be nice to
use if one wants to produce a gradual effect or
blend smoothly between two tones, e.g. 30%
and 50% grey.

Mining as a Resource

In the future, the ability to harness asteroids
will be a key step in humankind's expansion
and deep thrust into the nearby galaxies. As
previously mentioned, asteroids are abundantly
available resources full of massive amounts of
useful metals and minerals, including carbon,
iron, nickel, platinum band metals, and gold.
In addition, they contain considerable water
that can be used for a variety of purposes:
human consumption, energy and propulsion
systems. And therefore, as mentioned earlier,
it is essential to develop robust deep space
exploratory vehicles for which to explore, mine,
harvest and retrieve. (For further information
about asteroids as a resource, you may like to
check out this resource: *Space Resources* by
John and Ruth Lewis, from Columbia Press.)

For this tutorial, we are suddenly taking a turn
towards prop set design from markers to digital
and rapid colour pass for use in production.

Vernier Mining Rig

The objective here is to explore traditional
marker and digital design using industrial design

principles. For the design of a Deep Space Exploratory Vehicle (DSEV) - Vernier Rig – I want to explore a "sexy brick", in essence.

The design concept is to make a functional and retro looking transport and upgrade it with all the modern industrial design common sensibilities. The initial draft (**Fig.06**) is fairly rectangular, oblong and squat; perfectly ugly but functional. Tiny manoeuvring thrusters are slotted all around to provide maximum manoeuvrability for its purposes; however, it is hard to gauge how such a vehicle would appear from other angles.
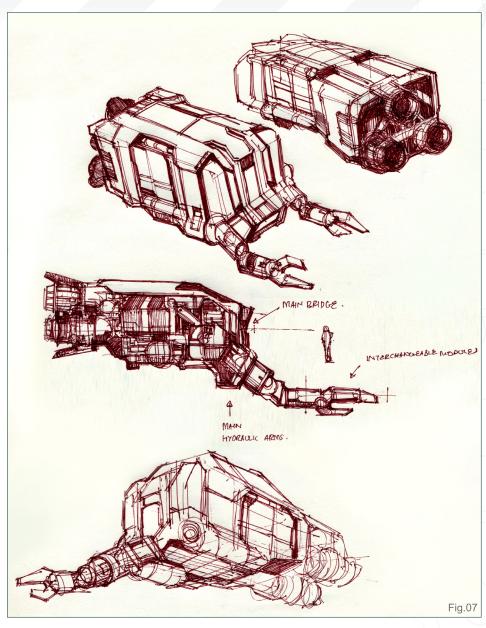
In addition, a smaller DS-ROV (Deep Space Mini Remote Operated Vehicle) is also sketched out, in case the eventuality requires a smaller craft to explore and retrieve core rock samples (**Fig.07**). It was initially designed as the core DSEV rig; however, on various iterations its profile and mechanics fit a smaller scaled device, such as a ROV of current day standards.
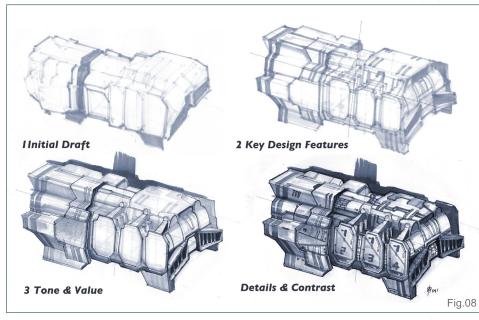
Building the Vernier

The Vernier is explored next from a different profile angle. Upon its second iteration, the squat rectangular shape is retained; however further additional elements are added, such as modular cargo side pods, ventral and dorsal airlocks and a large gold reflective bubble cockpit situated right at the front.

In **Fig.08**, the methodology is simplified into a three stage process and finished with further details and tightening. Hopefully, it is relatively straightforward and self explanatory, but just as a recap:

- **Initial Draft** – The silhouette is drafted; if the overall form reads well, it will read at a large or small scale
- **Key Design Features** – The trio of semi rectangular side-cargo pods are the distinguishing feature of the Vernier, and help break up the overall squat form
- **Tone & Value** – Shadows and tones according to its relative planes are applied
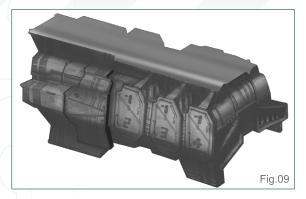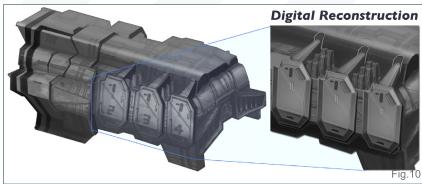- **Details & Contrast** – I liken this to

MAIN BRIDGE.

INTERCHANGEABLE MODULES

MAIN HYDRAULIC ARMS.

Fig.07

1 Initial Draft

2 Key Design Features

3 Tone & Value

Details & Contrast

Fig.08

Fig.09

Digital Reconstruction
Fig.10

tightening the screws; tiny details, design features and vents are applied

Digital Marker Technique – Selection Hell!

The next aspect is to explore using more digital tools – namely the production of a digital marker concept. The essential secret (if there are secrets) to this technique is an initial clean line draftsmanship, followed by selections. Multiple, multiple and multiple selections and gradients – that is the byword of industrial card design. In addition, for every edge there should be a bevel, a line, an ambient occlusion (shadow) and a highlight. This ultimately translates to: pain!

In theory and practice, one could optimise the process quite easily via a system of recorded actions, to produce selectable objects and selections at a single touch of a button. However, for the purposes of this workshop, only the Lasso, Fill Gradient and Airbrush are utilised for the entire process.

For this process we want to essentially break the original design (see **Fig.08**) down into key facets. There are primarily three key faces and two angled planes. So, armed with the Polygonal Lasso tool, let's rapidly take you through the process (minus the pain). From start to finish, this process of selections took a good ten hours of fudging – non-stop. In comparison, painting it digitally took two hours!

However, it is the type of finish and effect that is desired which is important, and thus it is vital to at least appreciate how to use various
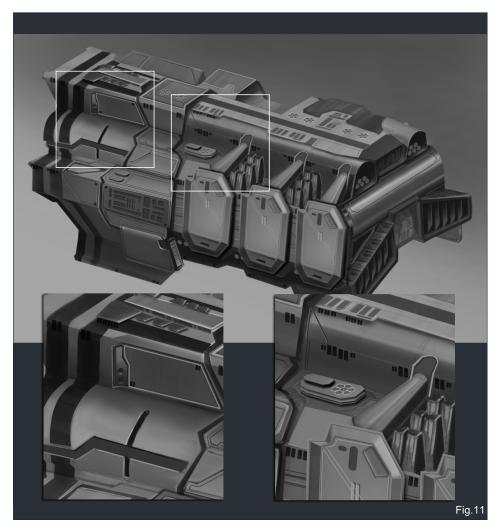
techniques to accomplish different levels of finish and decide on the method that suits you best. Tools for fools, remember!

In **Fig.09**, the upper facets are selected and an event gradient is applied to all planes facing the light. Next up is the production of the more complicated but repeatable cargo side pods (**Fig.10**). Because it is a complicated shape, this segment alone took a good hour to lathe, plan, plot, tone, and value. Once it was completed, however, it was a matter of grouping its various

components together and applying subtle drop shadows, and multiplication to produce a faux 3D effect.

Some hours later...

All the major facets have been plotted, selected and the respective Gradient Fill applied. The design looks respectable (**Fig.11**) and multiple key design features have been added to the whole space transport. Unfortunately, there

Fig.11

is nothing mysterious or special about this process, just mindless selections and gradient fills for each facet or curve. And the generation of a bevel, shadow and appropriate highlight. Lastly is the generation of a simple cast shadow (**Fig.12**), which involves plotting the way forms interact with the directional light source. Using the Line tool it is relatively straightforward to cast a direct shadow. In this instance, we use a top-down direction to plot the cast shadow. Cast shadows are effective in providing readability and three-dimensionality of any drawn two-dimensional object.
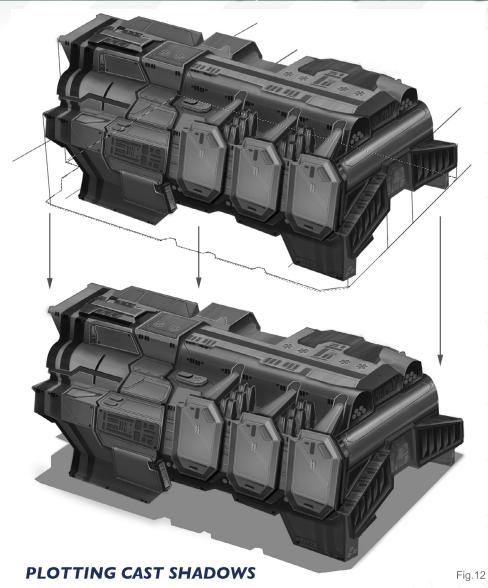
Digital Marker Technique – Painting it simply!

For the simpler option of painting the vehicle, an understanding of form will help immensely in the rendition of the various facets and
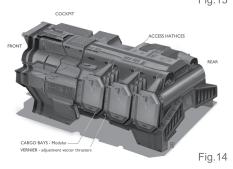

1

2

3
Fig.13

Fig.14

PLOTTING CAST SHADOWS

Fig.12

surfaces. For this methodology, I would highly recommend painting still life objects (from your local surroundings). You will be amazed at how rapidly and powerfully you can apply these studies and knowledge to your digital/traditional painting. Alternatively, you may choose to use 3D software or traditional sculpting of figures and objects to understand forms better (**Fig.13**).

Again, we utilise a simple three-step process towards this that I can summarise as (**Fig.14**):

• **Block in** – block out a relative form using the broadest brushes possible (on a new layer) and do not worry about details or being tight

• **Sculpt out** – much like trimming away excess clay, mould your transport into a more defined shape

• **Detail in** – using a finer brush, add all the focal details and subtle bounced light you think may be inherent

Colour Pass

This process is very straightforward. Honestly, if the values are relatively narrow, the transition to colour can be quite rapid and mocked up. Total time spent here was 20 minutes.

Now, firstly you have to understand that there is a natural frustration when adding colour to a greyscale image. In an environment, it may appear almost impossible or at odds. However, for a transport of character, a flattish or nondescript background is often sufficient towards producing a relatively pleasing effect.

In our process, shown in **Fig.15**, we start by colouring our stripes first (utilise the Colour layer option). Stripes are important as they help lead towards seeing a three-dimensional form. Next we apply a base colour. For space transports a creamy white base is an excellent starting point. This is primarily because cream white is a great way to pick up local ambient colour. For example, a white alabaster marble cast sphere placed above ground under a blue sky will have bluish hues above, and warmish bounced light below.

Once you have established a weak – almost anaemic – base colour, you should subtly add saturated colours and colour your background. The secret to making a greyscale image work, or a greyscale object work, is its surrounding colour. In this instance, we apply a saturated orange background, and this seats the whole image together. It is appropriate at this stage to flatten the whole image and tighten up over the image with a brief lick of paint to unify both object and background together (**Fig.16**).

III: Shaping a Future

Now that we have all our separate props built, we can cast them much like actors on a stage. In this instance a stage filled with asteroids rich with resources for harvesting, and a way station for humanity in the depths of space.

Stepping Stones

The objective here is to move from retro to digital. We bring it all together as an illustration/production set design. Now that we have taken the effort to produce the various components, the next step is to see how it stands up within an illustration or a virtual set. Before that though,

Fig.16

STRIPES & MARKINGS

BASE COLOUR

SATURATED COLOUR

Fig.15

let's take a small detour and discuss colour palettes and value ranges (**Fig.17**).

In the colour palette (see **Fig 17**), there are three ranges shown. These cover warm, cold and saturated. Upon analysis of most retro paintings or master paintings, a narrow palette of colour tends to be used, such as Palette 2 or Palette 1.5 in **Fig.17**. Whereas in contrast, the more stylistic or illustrative images depicted in the mid 1950s and 1960s tend to have more vibrant, saturated range of colours.

Notice on the far left there are approximate values of these colours in greyscale, which amount to either a wider range of values (saturated palette) or a narrow range of values (cool/warm palette shown above). For our purposes, we will use the selected range of cool colour palettes for the final aspect of this workshop.

Illustrating an Asteroid Base within an Asteroid Belt

In this illustration, we will consciously not have any luminous star nearby. Instead, we will use various bands of nebula cores and spiral galaxies to offset and provide lighting for the mining base (**Fig.18**). I find it useful to lock the colour palette off in a small corner to the top right, and move it about as needed.

Fig.17

In this instance, let's opt for a narrow green blue colour palette and simply start the process by blocking in a monochromic swirl of gas clouds. Next is the important task of blending in the various strokes to produce subtle midtones. Ensure you don't blend too much to allow for some of the original marks to show through, as these will help produce happy accidents and abstract shapes.

Subsequently, we rough in the approximate shape of the mining base, attached to a partially
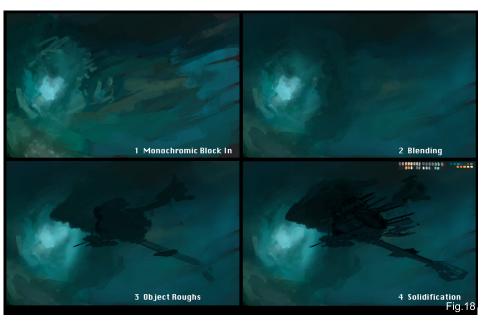
cored large asteroid. Lastly, we can bring these abstract shapes into a more solid form, which I term "solidification". This allows you to determine the contrast between hard surfaces and various objects.

In terms of composition, I felt it important to provide a sense of floating in deep space, and decided to invert and place upside down the top aspect of the base – and perhaps have various mining rigs docking and leaving the base.

Asteroid Field

Next is the plotting of an asteroid and debris field (**Fig.19**). I imagine that the area surrounding the large asteroid shell would be more devoid of asteroids and have been harvested to produce more harvester rigs and base modules. Keep in mind that various asteroids will come in all shapes, orientations and sizes. However, it does stand to reason that the further away they are, the smaller they may appear.

So using a semi circular design, the various asteroids are plotted in by hand by their multitudes and are repeated via various processes of multiplication until we have the

Fig.18

Fig.19

impression that of floating in a field of rocks and debris. Much like flotsam and jetsam at sea. Do ensure that the facets facing the primary light source are lit, and those facing away retain their base tone. To provide a really volumetric feel, you can later plot multiple cast shadows to good effect. Just ensure not to go overboard!
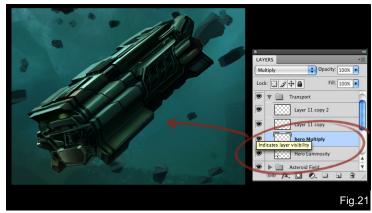
Props in an Asteroid Field

Thankfully, we have spent sufficient effort and time in generating a well designed DSEV rig for use in deep space, and these can be inserted into the scene relatively easily (**Fig.20**).

For a close up view of how such integration can be used, let's look at **Fig.21**. The carefully selected vehicle is inserted twice: one set on Luminosity (this allows the rig to attain a

Fig.20

Fig.21

Fig.22

Fig.23

homogenised colour with the backdrop), and the second set to Multiply (with opacity adjusted) in order to ensure that not too many details are shown, in comparison with the overall image.

To keep the whole illustration tidy, I have structured the various layers into three simple groups (**Fig.22**):
- Palette
- Group 1 – Transport
- Group 2 – Asteroid Field
- Group 3 – Asteroid Mining Base
- Background

The next aspect is to block in all the highlights and shadows of the lit and under lit surfaces of the base (**Fig.23**). As long as you keep within the established palette, this should be a relatively rapid affair. In this instance, you may choose to put your fully designed station set on

Overlay/Multiply onto the illustration. In contrast, however, I have chosen to merely Overlay the initial layout sketch, which is far cleaner and devoid of the finer details that won't be apparent to the viewer at such a distance anyway. The advantage of this is twofold:
- The detailed worked-up model allows the visual database to selectively add any key features without obscuration, and allows you to paint facets without getting bogged down with the lovely details
- A clean layout allows one to paint in merely facets and therefore simulate/replicate the feeling of how it may appear in space, but actually only provide simplified key data using various tones/values to denote a facet/ plane respectively

Post-Processing

The final aspects of any illustration are to add

some focal details, slight colour adjustments, glows, and final rechecks to ensure the composition and subject matter will appeal to and draw in the viewer (**Fig.24**). More importantly, please check that you have started and converted your image to a larger pixel resolution, as there is nothing more disheartening than having spent all that time painting and establishing a brilliant painting only to realise you have painted an image that, when printed, is only visibly clear on a pinhead.

Conclusion

Thank you for joining us on our far flung space quest from the outer reaches of other worlds, and the regions of the nearby planets in the solar system. We have discussed the more commonalities of exploration of outer space, living in intergalactic space, and extrapolated as far as the establishment of colonies and realms of mankind within the far distant future. In addition, I hope I have been able to provide and share useful production workflows and solutions as a modern day artist, that are versatile in any media, steeped in the foundations of traditional truisms, basics of art, and applicable within the modern and traditional media.

What may or may not have been apparent was that in this workshop, we have integrated multiple processes of production set design and prop design, and tied it all together to produce an illustration or mood piece for production. It is surely a more laborious process but the end result hopefully speaks for itself as a solid, coherent design illustration.

In our final chapter, we are going to re-examine mankind on their quest for the stars by imagining them adrift on countless star ships and establishing far flung colonies across space. We will draw upon the spirit of various space visionaries and come full circle in mankind's continued quest to explore, seek new life and discover the mysteries of the universe. See you next month!

Dr Chee Ming Wong

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Fig.24

"In the digital age we live in, we have so many means of creating an image, from photography to vector and 3D, that we should have no problem using everything at our disposal to help us do just that."

Anatomy of a Painting
: Different Means to one End

In this workshop, Nykolai Aleksander looks at a painting and dissects it, considering the different ways that certain aspects of the piece have been achieved.

Anatomy of a Painting
: Different Means to one End

Created In: Photoshop

Introduction

Painting

Noun

1. The process, art, or occupation of coating surfaces with paint for a utilitarian or artistic effect

2. A picture or design in paint

This is the dictionary definition of the word "painting", and it is generally what we think of when we hear that something was painted. We rarely think about the process of how a painting

Fig.00

Fig.01

was made, other than applying liquid pigments to canvas or, in this day and age, coloured pixels to a digital surface. As an artist, though, we probably do sit and think over something we see, wonder how another artist achieved a certain effect, how the picture was built up, and more importantly for this little article, if they used anything to help them achieve what they achieved.

Let's look at some of the Old Masters for a moment, just to see what they did and how they did it. Da Vinci and Michelangelo's sculptures and paintings of (often half-naked) figures are probably the best known in the world, and revered for their realism. Both dissected bodies to help them observe how the human body worked and looked. It is speculated that Vermeer used the camera obscura to help him copy his subjects and scenes with astounding accuracy, and Rembrandt used the grid to assist him in creating proper depth and proportions in his works. And it was, and still is, okay. Nobody questions their skill or talent. Their works inspire millions of people to try their hand at painting, and millions more to truly admire the art of it. With this in mind, let's take a look at today.

In the digital age we live in, we have so many means of creating an image, from photography to vector and 3D, that we should have no problem using everything at our disposal to help us do just that. I am sure that if the Old Masters had had the technology at hand that we now have, they would have used it to their full advantage.

Therefore in this workshop, we will be looking at a painting, dissecting it (in a manner of speaking) and looking at the different ways in which certain aspects of the piece are achieved (**Fig.00**). This is not so much a step-by-step painting tutorial as it is a look at the many possible means to an end. Even though the example picture is a painting, certain aspects of this article will go into non-painting territories, and therefore will cover what we call matte painting and photo manipulation as well – these will be pointed out to cancel out any confusion or misconceptions.

Bit by Bit

The Figure (Fig.01)

I used a reference photo of my husband to help me sketch the pose, and also the rough structure of the clothing (**Fig.01a**). As you can see, the character had a sword at first, too, for which I had used my own sword as a reference and then adapted it to make it look as I wanted it to … roughly anyway. At a later stage of the painting process it was decided the sword wasn't needed, so it got deleted. The face was sketched freehand. In fact, it was the face of a completely different painting that I never finished, but I liked it too much to leave it hidden in the depths of my hard drive, and so I copied the original sketch of it onto my new canvas.

Even when using a reference, it is not necessary to stick to it too closely. I strongly advise having some knowledge of anatomy, as it gives you the freedom to adjust things to your liking, and understand why something looks the way it looks from a particular angle. The same goes for clothing; once you understand how fabric

Fig.01a

falls and flows through studying it at any given opportunity, it is easy to adapt the clothes worn in a reference or change them completely.

It is not necessary to do a line sketch as I have done here (see **Fig.01a**), as a sketch or general composition can also be done by starting directly with colours and blocking everything in to get the basic structure (including light and shadow) right before actually starting to paint.

If you are not that keen on painting people, you could always use a photo directly in your painting, and manipulate it enough to make it blend nicely with it, or paint over it. If the figure is the focal point of that piece, this would usually be classed as a photo manipulation no matter how much you add by painting. Also, if you want to design your own character, this option doesn't give you quite as much freedom as painting would.

Taking a hint from the traditional side of painting, tracing the outlines of a photo is another option to help speed up your sketching progress - but again, it's still useful to know about anatomy when doing this. And as much as tracing seems to be looked down upon, it is useful when you are not that good at anatomy yet, but need to work fast. I've said this before, and will say it again: a perfectly traced reference photo will not guarantee a perfectly painted picture.

Sticking with photos for a minute, you can also use several different pictures to build a reference for your character via photo manipulation, or simply use different images to give you an idea for certain elements of your character without copying them directly.

But photos are not the only help you can get. You could use a live model to sketch from, though this is often rather hard to get, unless you bribe your friends into sitting for you, or have a group of models flocking to you anyway. You could use a painter's mannequin (those small wooden figures that you can buy in any art shop) as a guide for the pose, proportions and perspective. These dolls, however, will only give you a vague idea of how things should look, as they aren't all that detailed and also not quite as supple as the human body. Mirror referencing works too, though it is quite tough, as you have to pose in front of the mirror while painting. This kind of self-referencing works best when you just need to reference hands or feet.

And then there is 3D. You can render your model in a 3D programme – either roughly, or in a lot of detail, depending on what you need or prefer, making sure to spend a good amount of time on fixing anatomical problems that most default 3D figures seem to suffer from (or don't, and fix those problems when you paint) – and use it as a reference to sketch what you want. Also, looking at the polygonal mesh of a 3D figure is great for getting an idea of how and in which direction the "lines" of a figure curve,

Fig.02

which you can translate into your brushstrokes to add instant volume to the body parts and face.

Of course, you can do it all freehand – meaning no use of references whatsoever – but I don't think I need to really elaborate that point, as it goes without saying.

The Embroidery (Fig.02)
Both pieces of embroidery – on the vest and coat – are hand painted. For the one on the coat, I used the stencilled pattern from my own winter coat as reference, and for the one on the vest, I had a photo of brocade fabric as reference because I loved it so much.

It is very tedious and time-consuming to paint embroidery, lace or brocade by hand, especially

when you want it to be really detailed and realistic. There is no way around this. Repeat patterns are by far the easiest, as you only need to paint one section of it, and then duplicate it again and again until you have filled the area you want to fill.

Another way of making a pattern is by using the Shape tool. You can get free shapes online to add to your shape library. Combining several shapes results in some beautifully intricate patterns, and with the right amount of post-work, these look great in a painting.

If you're accustomed to the Pen tool, you can of course make some vector patterns yourself. Both these and the shapes work best for printed patterns or brocade, unless you spend some time getting a stitch pattern into them, in which

case you may as well want to paint them. Yet another way of adding embroidery, lace or brocade to your work is using photos, or photo brushes. There are many royalty free photos of lace, embroidery and brocade online, or you could take some yourself – maybe you or someone you know has some clothes or items with some good patterns on it! Once you have your photos, you can put them directly onto your painting and adjust them so they blend with your work, or make a brush from the photos and simply stamp the pattern onto your painting. The latter is the more versatile option, as it allows you to easily change the colours of your pattern without affecting the areas surrounding it.

Something to remember with this is that your pattern needs to follow the folds of the fabric you're putting it on. A good way to achieve this when you are not painting it directly onto your work is by first using the Free Transform option (Perspective, Skew and Distort) to get it into the right perspective and position, and then

adjusting the flow of it according to the fabric folds with the Liquify Filter.

This really is easy: quite obviously, you need to open the Liquify Filter for it. Depending on the size of your image, it may take a little while to load it. Once it has, choose the Forward Warp tool, and adjust your brush size to what works best for your pattern – the best thing really is to change the size according the folds' size that you have to warp the pattern into, as this will give you a smoother result. Also play around with the Brush Pressure and Density until you find a setting that suits you, and tick the little box next to Stylus Pressure. Then further down, tick the box next to Show Backdrop. In the dropdown menus next to that, choose All Layers and Behind for the Mode. Change the Opacity to something between 80 and 40, so you can see what you're doing but still see the original pattern through it. And then you just push and pull your pattern according to the flow of the fabric. You can zoom in and out by clicking the small + and – buttons at the bottom left.

If your painting is rather large, and the area you need to warp is quite small, you may want to select the area with the Lasso tool before opening the Liquify Filter, as this will save some loading time.

The Archways & Flagstones (Fig.03)
These were painted freehand, but with the help of some rough perspective guides – and if you have a keen eye, you'll spot where I screwed up!

Perspective can be quite a pain, but if you use a grid, however rough or refined, it can make things a lot easier. I will not explain how to go about drawing a perspective grid, as it would easily be an article all onto itself and there are numerous helpful tutorials and websites out there that explain it so much better than I ever could. Honestly! And I believe the newer versions of Photoshop have a Perspective Grid function anyway, so that would make matters a lot easier for those of you who have it. Again, you can use photo references to make your life a lot easier. Tracing works too, to get the general perspective and shape of your architecture down.

You can also model archways or pillars in a 3D programme, import them and use them as they are, as references, to trace or to paint over.

The Stone Texture (Fig.04)
This was made using several different custom-made photographic texture brushes.

You can of course paint it by hand, but sometimes it just takes too long.

Using photographic or painted texture brushes works a treat, and achieves just the right look. You will still have to adjust and manipulate the textures to make them blend into your painting, but it is so much less time-consuming than the first option.

Fig.03

Adding these textures in different colours and on separate Layers, and adjusting the Opacity and changing their Settings is great, because it really adds some depth to the stones.

When using texture brushes, you may have to adjust the perspective of the texture to match the perspective of the surface it's supposed to be on or in. You can easily do that with the Free Transform tool, using Perspective, Rotate, Skew and Distort.

The City (**Fig.05**)
This is actually not painted at all, but is a photo I took in Rome several years ago (**Fig.05a**), retouched to remove modern objects like satellite dishes, with the Median Filter applied to it and roughly painted over in some parts. So maybe I should call this painting a matte painting instead? I leave that decision up to you.

Just as with everything else, this can be painted by hand, and in that case perspective grids would be rather helpful, as would knowing about light and shadow if you do not use any references.

Once again, another way of creating a city backdrop would be to use a 3D programme to render it, and then work it into the painting.

With it being in the background, remember to keep it slightly out of focus, more so the further back it goes. The colours, too, get lighter the further they approach the horizon. This adds depth to your work.

Little Details and Textures (**Fig.06**)
The doves flying off in the background were painted freehand after looking at a few photos of birds in flight, though without using any direct references.

The overall texture was achieved with yet another photographic texture brush, and a texture photo.

Once more, things like birds, any other animals or people in the background can be painted, but could also be generated in 3D and then imported into the picture. Of course photos can also be used, as well as shapes or "cut-out" animals/people that are usually used to populate 3D renders of cityscapes or buildings.

Overall, textures are best achieved with photo textures or photographic texture brushes, and set to Overlay or Soft Light. Unless you are going for a real grungy effect, it is advisable to keep the Opacity of this last texture layer very low.

Fig.04

Fig.05

Fig.05a

Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction, some of the things described do not fall under what we know as painting, and when used, the final image should not be called one either. There are many different categories of Digital Art, and many people who confuse one with the other, or get very upset when they are made to believe something is one thing, when really it is another. There is Matte Painting, which usually has a photo/plate, and these days often some 3D aspects as its base, while a lot of it is painted (over) or manipulated in some way. Funnily enough, the term is only used for sceneries, meaning land- and cityscapes. When the main character in a picture is a photo, or an overpainted photo, and the rest is painted, it is widely known as Photo Manipulation. When 3D and painting are mixed together in one piece, you can either call it 3D with post-work done in 2D, or a painting with (underlying) 3D elements. And there are lots of things in between, and people still split hairs over what should be termed what.

Fig.06

Whatever you choose to do, you should enjoy doing it – there is no point in forcing yourself to do something in one way, and one way only, because "it's the done thing", or because calling something a Painting or Matte Painting supposedly sounds so much more prestigious than calling something a Photo Manipulation, or simply a Digital Media Collage. If something is done with care and skill, it will look good, and there is merit in mastering a skill – any skill. So let people know what and how you've done something, as only then they will be able to really appreciate your work for what it is.

2d artist

next month

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Raphael Lacoste
Blaz Porenta

Articles
Sketchbook of Drazenka Kimpel

Tutorials
Vehicle Painting Series
by Hoi Mun Tham

Speed Painting:
"Great cracks split the earth as the
ground shook beneath them"
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Elmaslli

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WHAT A SHAME

MAKING OF BY SARA BIDDLE

In this "Making Of" article, Sara Biddle walks us through the steps in the creation of her image "What a Shame" and shares with some of her thoughts and ideas along the way.
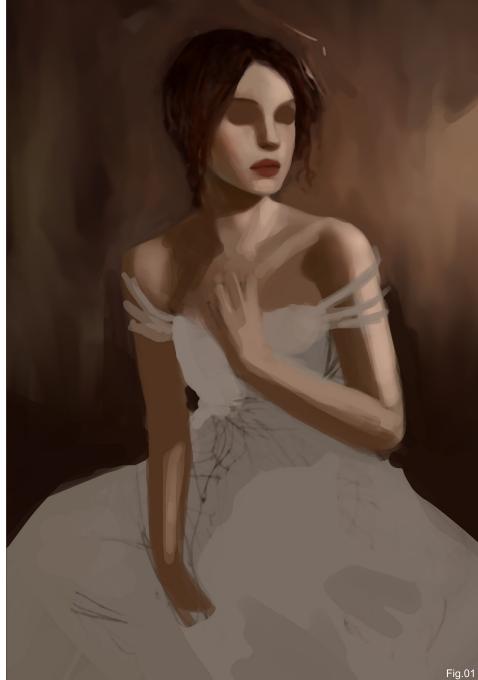
WHAT A SHAME

Created In: Photoshop

Hello, I'm Sara Biddle. I'm a 23 year-old, self-taught digital painter. In this "Making Of" article, I'd like to walk you through the steps in the creation of my image "What a Shame" and share with you some of my thoughts and ideas along the way.

It all started when I found a story outline that I had written previously, hidden away in an unused desk drawer. The story consisted of a girl who had everything she could ever ask for in life. Despite the warning words of others, the temptation of her father's occult obsession led her in the wrong direction, which ultimately brought about her demise. I decided I wanted to capture that moment of guilt she must have faced. I immediately started brainstorming ideas and elements that could bring the painting together. The result was the idea of a seemingly innocent young girl in a white dress with tarot-type cards spilled out on the floor around her.

I began by scribbling out a few simple sketches on paper to get a feel for the subject and to

Fig.02

Fig.01

experiment with different poses and ideas. After a few random tests, I found a direction that I really liked and quickly began blocking in shapes and colours with a simple hard-edged round brush in Photoshop. I found flesh coloured tones blended with deep reds and browns to be an appealing colour palette for the image (**Fig.01**).

For anatomy and lighting reference, I always keep a mirror and a flashlight close to my desk.

Though looking back and forth in a mirror is a bit more tedious than snapping a photograph, I find that I learn much more and study closer with this method. After studying my own posture for a while, I decided to change her posture from the original sketch, positioning her more upright and straightforward in hopes that this would make her seem more alert and aware. For the skin, I selected many variating colours of orange and pink and blended them with a spackled brush set to very low opacity. For areas where
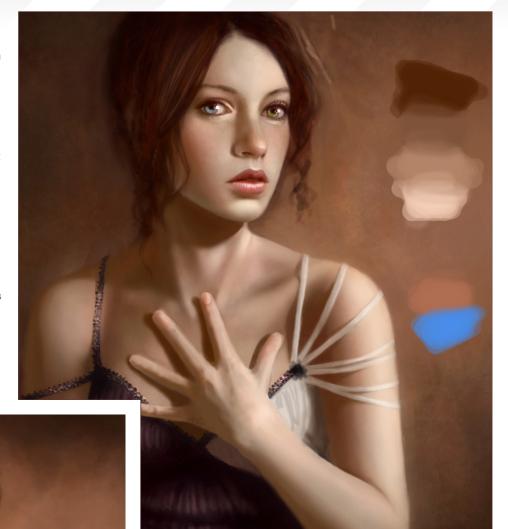
the skin is thinner, such as the hand and the chest, I lightly brushed in veins using a light ultramarine shade of blue to give the impression of transparency (**Fig.02**).

I also changed the dress to give a variance in colour. At first I had my heart set on a white dress but the beautiful plum colour really caught my attention against the natural colour palette and I was unable to part with it!

To me, the face and expression are extremely important to the overall look and impression of an image, and so I devote a lot of extra time and care to creating and detailing faces. For this image, I chose to give the character beautiful wide eyes, each a different colour - one a sky blue, the other a mossy green. I felt this would add to the uniqueness of her character and perhaps symbolize how their are two sides to

Fig.03

Fig.04

her personality. For the expression, I attempted to give her a look of guilt, mixed with callousness and fear. I painted in the face detail with a custom textured round brush set to low opacity (around 10% or less)(**Fig.03**).
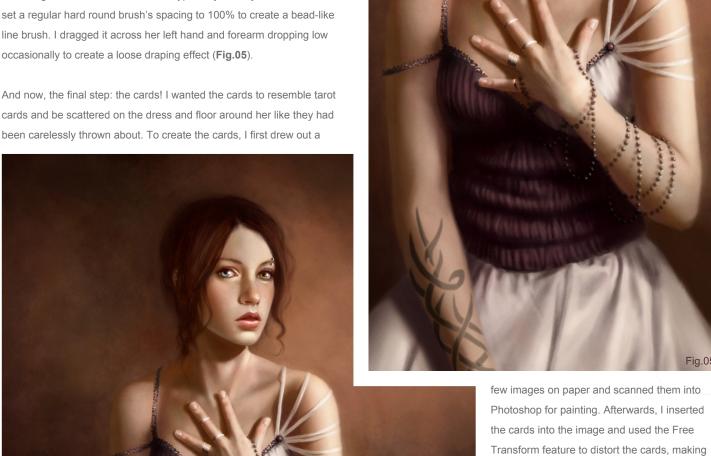
For help with the dress, I took two regular sleeping pillows and stuffed them into one of my old skirts, giving the skirt shape and the illusion of legs folded underneath. I set up an area in my workspace on the floor and used the skirt dummy as study reference for the dress form and folds. I shaded the skirt in hues ranging from light desaturated pink to a lavender-gray, lightly mixing in colours from the background in different areas to bring things together (**Fig.04**).

I'm very fond of creating different custom brushes, both for beautiful texture and to speed up workflow. For the lace, I created a custom brush resembling a swirly lace-like pattern and use it as a stamp around the edges of the dress, rotating it to conform to the angle of the dress hem (**Fig.03**)

Now that the image was nearing completion, I took the opportunity to add in more details. Using a small round brush, I painted in details of a tattoo on her right forearm and the various types of jewellery. For the beads, I set a regular hard round brush's spacing to 100% to create a bead-like line brush. I dragged it across her left hand and forearm dropping low occasionally to create a loose draping effect (**Fig.05**).

And now, the final step: the cards! I wanted the cards to resemble tarot cards and be scattered on the dress and floor around her like they had been carelessly thrown about. To create the cards, I first drew out a

Fig.05

few images on paper and scanned them into Photoshop for painting. Afterwards, I inserted the cards into the image and used the Free Transform feature to distort the cards, making them appear angled. The card she's holding sports a demonic being, symbolizing her fate. The others include a goddess with a child and a snake with a sword. These extra cards surrounding her have no meaning in the story, they're just for looks. (Plus I really enjoyed making them!) (**Fig.06**).

By finishing this image, I feel like I've created the image that I imagined originally, and I'm really happy with the way it turned out (**Fig.07**).

Sara Biddle

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Fig.06

Fig.07

"There are, in my opinion, three ways of creating artwork. The first way is with a clearly thought-out idea and a clear image in mind, where you need to move the image from your imagination onto a canvas. This is the best way to avoid big problems in the process of painting artwork, and eventually you get a clear result."

In this article, Dmitry Grebenkov shares the process taken to create his digital painting "Black", from the intial ideas stage all the way to the final image.

BLACK

MAKING OF BY DMITRY GREBENKOV

BLACK

Created In: Corel Painter X

There are, in my opinion, three ways of creating artwork. The first way is with a clearly thought-out idea and a clear image in mind, where you need to move the image from your imagination onto a canvas. This is the best way to avoid big problems in the process of painting artwork, and eventually you get a clear result. I actually have this happen to me very rarely. I try to use this method to translate my work, always leaving room for "happy accidents". The second way is an associative search, when you create a chaotic canvas of lines and shapes and then find something within the chaos that you can add to. This way of making artwork comes in when you just want to draw, but don't know exactly what you want to do. The third method is when you have some vague images and fragments of images in your head and start to connect those images, and you eventually get the work done in very fun way.

With this work, I understood clearly the image that I wanted to create, as well as the mood of the piece – daydreaming, sadness, anticipation; a picture with some unknown history behind it. For this image, I used my favourite software: Corel Painter X.

After quickly exploring my idea through sketches, I created a clear line art (**Fig.01**). Line art is very important because in the process of drawing you can fix things simply and painlessly, and get a clear vision of the image. When you're done with the line art, the drawing can then move onto the next stage where you can just fill the frame with a specified pattern of shapes and colour. The quality of line art will depend on the remaining lines in the final image. If you need to, you may have to sweat to create a perfect line art, but in my case, with this image, it was not necessary.

Fig.01
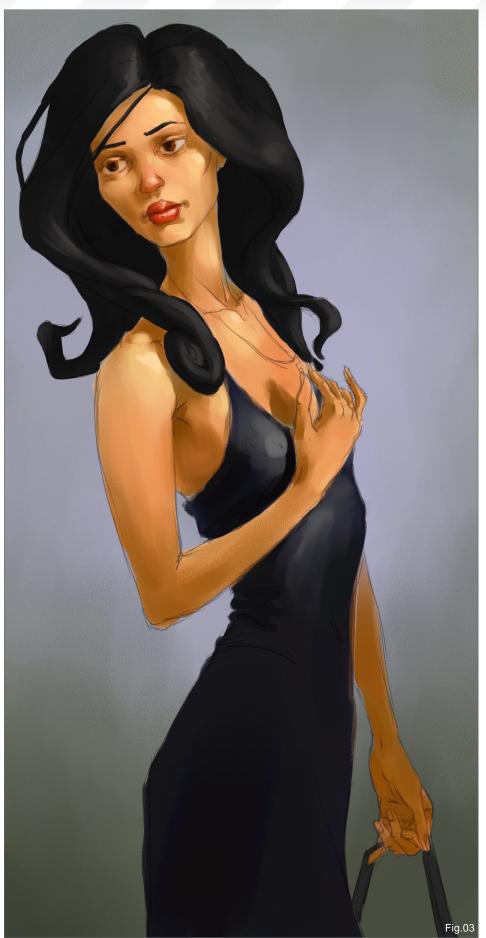
In the second stage, I filled in the different layers of the main shapes of the figure, broke in some colour and created the background (**Fig.02**). All this was done underneath the line art. Another important thing to mention is the contrast of the image. In this piece, the contrast is mainly between the dark hair and dress and the bright background, and the main colour contrast is the warm skin tones against the cool colour of the background.

I configured Painter for my needs, switched on the layer Preserve Transparency function (to feel free with the rough shading and colouring in selected layers) and then set up the paper. My favourite tool is the Round Oil Pastel. Pastel interacts with the paper and gives gentle colour shading. My personal favourite canvas is a basic paper, but it is slightly more granular than I needed, so I reduced the texture size of the paper to 60-70% and decreased the contrast to 35-40%. What I like most about Painter is the fact that the colours you're using interact with the layers below, and you get very nice shading and don't need to use any blenders.

Fig.02

Fig.03

At this stage I did some quick shading of all forms, and got the basic colour accents (**Fig.03**). The light comes from the right and is focused on her face, so I had maximum accentuation in this part of image. I painted the lips with bright red lipstick to add further accent to the face.

In the next step I turned off Preserve Transparency, because at this stage I no longer needed the line art. I created a new layer over all other layers, where I started to add detail to parts of image, working initially on her face (**Fig.04**). The face is the most important thing for me, and in this image I was searching for the exact tone and colour solutions that were to be used for the rest of the image.

I continued to refine the image by working on her hands next (**Fig.05**), and adding little touches to the dress and bag strap in her hand. I gave her nails red varnish to support the bright red of her lips. I also gave a slight touch of silhouette to her hair.

Fig.04

Fig.05

Fig.07

Fig.06

The next step was adding the detail of the hair and painting the jewellery – earrings and a pendant on a chain. I was aiming for a certain romantic image feeling, the kind that comes in a pink heart with a golden frame. I wasn't too fond of some of the curls here so I started fixing them (**Fig.06**). The big curl on her shoulder popped out from the style of the image and looked too heavy. So I made it thinner and lighter, and continued work on the hair (**Fig.07**).

At this stage, I carefully and critically considered the entire image. I found that the transition

from the chest to the stomach broke the line of the body and made the silhouette look ugly. To resolve this area I removed the light spots on the dress below the hand, and the whole silhouette looked greatly improved (**Fig.08**).

I removed some of the inaccuracies and random spots within the image, and then started work on the background, making ambiguous silhouettes against a background and adding some drops of rain (**Fig.09**). This background added greater mood and feeling to the image, and the whole piece began to raise more questions about the history behind it.

The image was then complete.

Dmitry Grebenkov

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Fig.08

Fig.09

Speed painting
digital painting tutorial series volume 2

Introduction
Our brand new 91-page eBook is a collection of "Speed Painting" tutorials which have been created by some of the top digital painters around today. The idea behind this tutorial series was for the artist to interpret a one-line descriptive brief (provided by us!), create a speed painting from it and then produce a tutorial showing and explaining each stage of production of the artwork. This downloadable PDF eBook can be followed in most 2D software packages that support paintbrushes and layers.

The featured artists are:

Nathaniel West
Daniel Ljunggren
Emrah Elmasli
Mike Corriero
Rich Tilbury
Robin Olausson
Ignacio Bazan Lazcano
Marc Brunet
Nick Oroc
Serg S
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Downloadable Tutorial EBook

DIGITAL ART MASTERS
VOLUME 3

With the release of 3DTotal's new book, *Digital Art Masters: Volume 3*, we have some exclusive chapters for you...

This book is more than just an artwork book. Not only does it feature full-colour, full-page images, but each artist has given a detailed description, in their own words, of the creation process behind each piece of published artwork. And they've done it especially for this book!

This month we feature:

"Fallen Beauty"
by David Edwards

FALLEN BEAUTY
By David Edwards

INTRODUCTION
I'm constantly inspired by rusty old buildings and factories, places that once had life, a purpose and a strong place in society; gears of the industrial world that have long since seized and become forgotten, consumed by nature, painted with a new shade of beauty where machines made of steel are bent with vines and plants climb high up walls and through rooftops...

Fallen Beauty was taken from this inspiration and fused together with ancient wonders, such as the lost cities of Cambodia and other parts of the world where civilizations had sunk into the sands of time over

Fig.01

Fig.02a

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thousands of years, and the idea that nature has slowly begun to tear down the world built by man in an effort to heal and repair itself from centuries of abuse and neglect.

The original photo was taken while on a business trip in London (Fig.01); I was asked by a client to photograph a few financial buildings, and when that was done I used the rest of the time to take in the sites. It was always a childhood dream to see a dinosaur in the "flesh", or bone, as the case may be, so I took a trip over to the Natural History Museum and began shooting lots of pics!

RESEARCH
Before I begin working a new matte, or even making my first sketches, I'll spend as much time as I possibly can researching the subject and sourcing reference images from the web; this can take anything from a few days to a few weeks, depending on time permitting and the complexity of the job. I try to absorb myself in the subject as much as possible to get a feeling for the environment and the story being told. I mainly use the web to find reference images, using various image stock libraries. When searching for images I try to find those that have interesting compositions and lighting, images that emote the same feeling that I'm trying to express.

PRE-PRODUCTION THOUGHTS
To begin with, I think about my goals, what I want to achieve and how I'm going to achieve them. With Fallen Beauty, this was more associated with a feeling rather than a direct brief, so for me, in this case, the overall process was a lot more organic with greater room to express; the perfect brief one might guess, but also the most difficult!

I live in a remote part of Yorkshire, on the edge of Leeds, where I'm surrounded by wildlife and the sounds of nature; the kind of sounds that you never hear living in a built-up urban surrounding. Being surrounded by this

Fig.02b

Fig.03

Fig.04

Fig.05

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kind of environment adds to the emersion. When I look back on the final image while listening to the sounds through my window, I can see how much this added to the final effect. I can imagine I might hear the same sounds in the painting.

PREPARATION
I took the original photo of the Natural History Museum interior and began preparing this for the base. My first thought was about what I wanted the final crop to be. Because this wasn't for film output, I wasn't too concerned about the size; however, I did have a square ratio in mind, allowing the opportunity to add a camera move with a final crop into widescreen should I wish. The square ratio allows me the freedom to move around within this area.

Fig.06a

CLEANING THE PLATE
I resized the canvas to a 6k square so I could get in detail where needed without loss of quality. I then began the process of cleaning the plate; in this stage I removed all the people and familiar signs of modern day society. The image I had in mind existed thousands of years in the future, so I had to think to myself about what would still exist and what would have decayed over time. For the most part, I decided to keep only the basic structure – the stone walls and glass in this case. I bent the rules a little though, as glass would probably have been destroyed over time, but I thought it was cool and so decided to make an exception with this (Fig.02a–b).

The process of removing the people was pretty laborious and time consuming; it involved using a combination of the brush and clone tools to paint them out and overpaint the backgrounds back in. Care should always be taken to match the tones and sample the right areas taking into account the effect of shadows and light. With this being a symmetrical building, I looked for symmetrical elements that could be cut out and flipped over to the other side. Once I'd cleared out all the people and signs, I was left with a pretty empty place. I then started working on the existing light, removing any interior illumination from artificial lighting and generally toning the scene down to a more neutral tone.

Fig.06b

COMPOSITION STAGE
Composition is always very important; I decided early that my focal point was going to be the stairs leading up to the lone statue. Everything had to lead the eyes in this direction; the composition of the plants and the placement of the flowers in the pool are all placed to direct the viewer in one direction.

With the plate finally cleaned up, the next step was to extend it to fill the canvas. In this example, I extended around 30% to the left and around 15% to the bottom and right. This was done by simply copying parts of the existing wall and moving them out, using the distort

Fig.07

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tool to correct the perspective. Given the design of this building, it became very easy to extend as most of the walls were repeated in the original design. I then started to add in the leaves, moss, plants and foliage, carefully building up the environment and taking care not to overdo the effect to the point that it became too dense (Fig.03). I was aiming for a location that would be completely overrun with plant life, with trees breaking through the stone floor and vines growing across the ceiling – it had to seem like a secret haven of life in the middle of a dense jungle, without becoming so dense that it was unreadable.

As I continued, I saved multiple iterations often branching off in two or three directions working simultaneously on each file, seeing how one might work better than another. With this piece, I ended up with four different versions, each more developed than the last. One version initially took a more sandy approach which wasn't working, while another was very much like the final result with no water and a different tone (Fig.04–05).

LIGHTING AND ATMOSPHERE
Once the elements were all in place, I began the final process of color correcting and lighting – this was key to establishing a sense of realism. The lighting was also used to re-enforce the composition, again directing the eye with different values, creating a corridor of light for the viewer to move through.

Throughout the lighting process, I made heavy use of gradient maps in conjunction with the opacity and various blend modes such as overlay, multiply and screen to achieve different tones, seeing what worked and what didn't (Fig.06a–b).

Lighting is the most important stage for me and one that goes through much iteration. Effective lighting can direct the mood of a scene and re-inforce the shot, while equally bad lighting can ruin a great painting. With Fallen Beauty I tried to capture the essence of the environment through subtle variations in the shade and light which breaks through the mist. Another trick that I employed was to pick off highlights/light blooms where the light would fall. I think doing this allows you to avoid using excessive CG-looking shafts of light and yet can still create the illusion of light through suggestion (Fig.07–08).

CONCLUSION
I was happy with the final results; however, there's always something else that can be done – another brush stroke here and there. One might say a painting's never quite finished, only abandoned. But in the end, I feel I accomplished the original vision of what I set out to create (Fig.09).

Fig.09

ARTIST PORTFOLIO

3dtotal.com

3DTotal is a resource website for the CG community; amongst our growing number of products for CG artists, we produce two monthly downloadable PDF magazines – *2DArtist* and *3DCreative*. We are based in the West Midlands, in the UK, and our intention with our magazines is to make each issue as full of great articles, images, interviews and tutorials as possible. If you would like more information on 3DTotal or our magazines, or if you have a question for one our team, please use the links below.

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